

EXCLUSIVE: THIS WEEK

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Labour plans tough line on strikes

Blair ready to cut links with unions

By Jill Sherman and Philip Bassett

TONY BLAIR is drawing up contingency plans to break the party's historic link with trade unions entirely if they provoke a wave of strikes during the first summer of a Labour government.

Under the strategy, Mr Blair would ballot party members on whether they wanted to sever the traditional link with the unions, which founded the party in 1901. If the 400,000 members voted in favour, the move would have to be put to the annual conference, where unions have 50 per cent of the vote. But Mr Blair would be confident of success if he had a substantial party mandate.

If the move went ahead, unions would lose their voting rights at the party conference, their seats on Labour's ruling body, the national executive, and the national policy forum. One of the main stumbling blocks could be finance, as unions provide more than half of the party's funds. Mr Blair may seek state funding for political parties to make up the shortfall, although this would be difficult to get through the Commons.

The scheme, which would in effect tear up the party's constitution, comes amid increasing industrial action. Post Office workers have already defied Mr Blair's call to reballoon their members on strike action and intend to press ahead with two one-day strikes this month.

Yesterday the RMT, the rail union, announced that workers at five more regional rail companies would join their



"She's just heard about Blair and the unions splitting up"

dispute, striking on September 20 and September 23.

Unions, angered by Mr Blair's threats of anti-strike legislation, yesterday backed calls for a much greater expansion of workers' rights than Mr Blair would accept. Earlier this week they defied him by proposing a minimum wage of £4.26 an hour.

On finance, party sources argue that they may be able to attract substantial donations from individuals. In the past few weeks Labour has received £1m from Matthew Harding, vice-chairman of Chelsea Football Club, £1m from animal rights groups and £600,000 from Paul Hamlyn, the publisher. The unions' contribution as a percentage of income has fallen significantly in recent years.

Mr Blair is becoming increasingly concerned about the prospect of a "summer of

discontent" in the early months of a Labour government. Senior party sources claim they have been warned that health and education unions are preparing to oppose any deal which the pay review bodies and the Government recommend next January and will wait for Labour to improve the offer.

Pay for local authority manual workers is settled in the early summer, possibly within weeks of a Labour victory, and Mr Blair fears that these workers may also decide to take advantage of a more sympathetic administration. Gordon Brown, who would then be Chancellor, would refuse to agree to their demands.

The Labour leadership has decided to take a tough approach to pay review body recommendations. Sources have made clear that a Labour government would fund in full any awards it agreed to, but Mr Brown would not accept awards he could not afford.

A ballot on the union connection could take place within weeks of Mr Blair becoming Prime Minister, if unions decided to take industrial action, and be put to the party conference next autumn. Union leaders will be furious that Mr Blair is contemplating such a step to undermine them. John Monks, the TUC general secretary who is an ally of Mr Blair's, publicly criticised the Labour leadership when he heard of the proposals to introduce new anti-strike legislation.



Noel Gallagher arrives back at Heathrow last night. He refused to continue after another quarrel with brother Liam

Oasis tour silenced by brothers' row

By Carol Midgley and Quentin Letts

OASIS, the anarchic band tipped to become the biggest pop phenomenon since The Beatles, have abandoned their US tour amid speculation that they are about to split up.

Noel Gallagher, 28, the songwriter with the hugely successful British pop band, yesterday flew home to Britain

following the latest row with his brother and lead singer, Liam, 23. The remaining members of the band were also preparing to fly back.

The strained relations between the brothers reached breaking point before a sound check for their show in Charlotte, North Carolina, on Wednesday.

Three hours before they were due to go on stage in

front of 5,000 fans at the Charlotte Hornets Training Centre, Noel announced that he would not be playing. The band were also understood to be unhappy with some poor reviews from the American media. Unlike in Britain, not all their shows had been sell-outs and the tour has been generally regarded as a disappointment.

Jon Percival, event opera-

tions manager at the venue, said: "We received a statement saying: 'Due to unforeseen circumstances, the concert has been cancelled and will not be rescheduled.' The fans, who had paid £15 a ticket, were turned away."

The band's record company, Creation, refused to confirm or deny that Oasis were to split. Their spokesman John

Continued on page 3, col 5

Saddam threatens Kuwait over use of air base

By Tom Rhodes and Michael Theodorou

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein sought to draw the United States deeper into direct conflict last night, threatening Kuwait and claiming his forces had fired three more missiles at American aircraft patrolling the extended no-fly zone.

Increasingly bellicose rhetoric between Baghdad and Washington left few in doubt that further airstrikes would be ordered by President Clinton.

Another American carrier battle group, led by the USS Enterprise, was on standby in the Adriatic last night, as eight F117A Stealth fighters began their long trip to a base in Kuwait in preparation for a new round of retaliatory strikes. Any such action is also expected to involve B52 bombers from Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, and warships armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles, which are already in the Gulf.

Tariq Aziz, the deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, issued a warning to Kuwait yesterday that it should not permit its bases to be used for a possible strike against Iraq. "We consider this conduct on the part of the Kuwait regime a flagrant aggression against Iraqi people and an act of war against Iraq," he said.

The White House said no Iraqi missiles had been fired at American aircraft. "The only fireworks today have come from Tariq Aziz's mouth," one official said. William Perry, the Defence Secretary, who had issued a warning of a "disproportionate" response to any provocation of American forces, said the Iraqi minister's comments were "totally unacceptable".

He said: "US forces have

Continued on page 2, col 1

Republican sniping, page 14

Hogg wins support for lower cattle cull

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

THE Government took the first step yesterday towards abandoning or severely scaling down the selective slaughter of 125,000 younger cattle thought to be at greatest risk from BSE.

Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, won backing from the Cabinet for his intention to tell Brussels that he had no hope of getting the cull scheme passed by the Commons without a guarantee that the export ban on British beef would be lifted soon. He is to argue in talks with Franz Fischler, the Agriculture Commissioner, on Monday that new scientific research suggesting that BSE will die out naturally in five

years has changed the basis on which the original slaughter plans were based. But he will also accept that other research confirming that BSE can be passed from mothers to calves could justify the slaughter of some 22,000 "last born" calves of infected cows.

The Cabinet discussion appeared to reflect the growing recognition among ministers that the timetable agreed at the Florence summit for the lifting of the beef ban is unlikely to be met. The Government is deeply anxious to avoid a further confrontation with Brussels on the issue, and is avoiding inflammatory public statements.

But Mr Hogg's view that there is little point in going ahead with the selective slaughter — which was never scientifically justified but agreed to only as part of a framework for lifting the ban — if the prohibition is to remain in force has strong backing in the Tory party.

Meanwhile the Government took urgent action to reduce the growing backlog of older cattle to be slaughtered under the 30-month scheme. Measures agreed included allowing a greater proportion of each animal to be placed in cold storage and the conversion of two more large grain stores into cold storage centres, providing space for an extra 25,000 carcasses.

Prince vents anger against tourist hotel 'uglification'

By Alan Hamilton

THE Prince of Wales, scourge of carbonates, has found a new source of blots on the landscape, and an exorcism of a word to describe them. The latest offenders are hotels, and what they contribute to the world is "uglification".

Ugly and insensitive hotels are rapidly spoiling the world's unspoiled places, the Prince says in an article directed at the tourist industry to be published on Monday.

Instead of throwing up endless concrete monstrosities, hotel companies should make much more use of existing buildings, accommodating tourists in converted mills, old hospitals, abandoned military buildings, or monasteries, the Prince says. From Hyde Park Corner in London to the most far-flung corners of Africa, he suggests, the tourist industry has erected hideous carbon-

des for short-term gain, with no regard to surroundings or environment.

The Prince sounds off in the trade magazine *Green Hotelier*, launched a year ago as part of his initiative, through his Business Leaders' Forum, to persuade the international hotel industry to become more environmentally friendly, whether by building sympathetically or by washing guest towels only when they have been used.

"Economic growth and increased tourism have brought with them the almost unstoppable seeds of destruction for the unspoiled parts of our world which drive the quest for travel in the first place. For many places the process of uglification through insensitive development for mass tourism, and the destruction of natural environments,

townscapes and fragile ecosystems have demonstrated, vividly and tragically, the limits to sustainability."

As an example of ugliness close to home, or what he calls "bad-mannered development", the Prince cites the collection of concrete hotels clustered around Hyde Park Corner — although just across the street is another hotel converted from an old hospital.

Hyde Park Corner's three giant hotels, which date from the 1960s, are the Hilton, the Intercontinental and the Four Seasons, formerly the Inn on the Park. On the opposite corner is the Lansborough, carved in the 1990s out of what used to be St George's Hospital, and preserving the old building's classical facade.

Letters, page 19



The Hilton hotel, left, and the Intercontinental, on London's Hyde Park Corner

Model agency boss jailed

Peter Martin, the boss of a model agency who drugged and brainwashed teenage girls at his home, was jailed for 20 years for a series of rapes and assaults.

Martin, 56, a former policeman, provided girls for the football and media tycoon Owen Oyston, who was jailed for six years in May for raping and assaulting a 16-year-old model delivered to his home by Martin. Page 5

Girls rout boys in A-level war

Girls in independent schools have overtaken boys at A level. Until now the battle of the sexes has been won by girls at GCSE and by boys at A level. But the first gender analysis of the independent sector's results shows that male dominance in the sixth form is over. Pages 10, 35

Record FT index

A raft of strong company results helped the FT-SE 100 index to rise 27.0 points, closing at a record 3932.6 despite disappointment over inflation, which fell to 2.1 per cent in August from 2.2 per cent in July. Page 23

Liverpool win

Liverpool beat the part-timers MyPa-47 1-0 at Anjalankoski in Finland in the first leg of their European Cup Winners' Cup tie. Stig Inge Bjornebye scored the goal in the second half after 61 minutes with a left-footed volley. Page 44



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Ministers fear new IRA bomb campaign

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
AND MICHAEL EVANS

MINISTERS fear that the IRA is poised for a mainland bombing campaign in defiance of intensifying pressure for a renewed ceasefire. Intelligence services have warned that a small network of terrorists is preparing to target high-profile industrial or commercial centres. They are said to have compiled a honed-down list of targets that would hit Britain financially, prompting fears that attacks may again be aimed at the City of London.

Ministers have been told that experienced IRA members are leading training programmes in Britain in preparation for a bombing offensive within the next two months. The warnings contradict suggestions by the Irish Government that the IRA is poised to declare a ceasefire in an effort to allow Sinn Féin, its political wing, into the Northern Ireland cross-party talks.

The new intelligence information comes in the wake of a warning by Sir Hugh Annesley, the former RUC Chief Constable, that the IRA was preparing a mainland campaign. The Belfast talks have reached a critical stage, with the

British and Irish governments pressing parties to move to substantive discussions, including the surrender of terrorist weapons. British Government sources say that the new intelligence casts serious doubts on the optimism shown by John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, who indicated on Wednesday that there was a prospect of an IRA ceasefire. Fears have increased despite police and MI5 breakthroughs in which the IRA's "engineering department", which develops bomb-making techniques, is thought to have been undermined.

Although seizures of large caches of arms and equipment are thought to have disrupted plans, intelligence services believe that the terrorists are lying low in readiness for a headline-grabbing "spectacular" by IRA "cleanskins" — trained terrorists unknown to the police. The unconvicted terrorists are believed to have been behind the London Docklands bombing that ended the IRA ceasefire in February, and the Manchester bomb that devastated the Arndale shopping centre.

Some republican activists are known to have opposed a renewed terror campaign, claiming that the movement has recaptured some of the moral high ground from loyalists who were embroiled in summer violence in Northern Ireland. Members of the IRA's army council have also been warned that an attack could severely damage support in the US. In the run-up to the US Presidential elections in November, any attack would draw scathing criticism from President Clinton as he leads a high-profile international drive against terrorism.

Fury as legal aid reforms go ahead

The Government will face concerted opposition — including possible strike action — over its intention to go ahead with legal aid reforms that do not need legislation, writes Frances Gibb. The Law Society and advice groups including the Child Poverty Action Group and Shelter yesterday launched a joint campaign to fight the reforms.

Vodka ad rebuke

An poster depicting a confession box bursting into flames as the devil tries to purify himself under the influence of Smirnoff vodka has caused offence in Ireland. The Republic's Advertising Standards Authority has censured Smirnoff's advertising agency, Cawley Nea in Dublin, after complaints about it using the image of a sacrament. Jim Cantwell, spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church, said: "Catholics are not averse to humour, but this was a joke in bad taste."

MS complaints

The Multiple Sclerosis Society has been inundated with complaints and accused of breaching confidentiality by sending a sensitive magazine to 55,000 members in a see-through envelope. Debbie Henn, secretary of the MS Society branch in Croydon, south London, said: "The issue has the words 'Incontinence, freedom and you' in enormous orange letters. People are sensitive enough about being ill without the postman and everyone else seeing this."

Cool Carey

The Archbishop of Canterbury will take part tomorrow in an "ambient, chilled, acid jazz, trip-hop" service that has more in common with a nightclub than a church service. Dr George Carey will sit on a cushion in the nonconformist chapel, answer questions and sample "pumping dance music" at the hour-long act of worship which he asked to attend, according to today's *Church Times*. Up to 100 youths are expected to attend the service, which takes place monthly in Cranbrook, Kent.

Royal reporter

The Duchess of York has been commissioned to write celebrity interviews for *Paris Match*, four years after suing the French magazine for publishing the infamous toe-sucking pictures that precipitated her fall from grace. A spokesman for *Paris Match* said last night: "She is going to be one of our reporters. We approached her and she accepted. Fergie is very well known in France and she is very popular. She is very direct and spontaneous and the French love her."

Thinking small

Peter Lilley has disclosed that he is the only Cabinet member to eschew a five-star hotel room during the Conservative conference, because he cannot abide "wasting money". The Social Security Secretary, who runs a £90 billion budget, is portrayed in a new BBC2 documentary, *The System*, as a frugal character. At the Blackpool conference last year, he is shown rehearsing his big speech in a modest, three-star hotel room while other Cabinet ministers were at the Imperial.

Iraqi threat

Continued from page 1
very robust rules of engagement. So everybody should understand that the United States will take all necessary and appropriate action to protect our forces and to protect our interests in the area." The Kuwaiti Cabinet and military commanders met in emergency session to discuss the latest statements from Iraq, a country whose threats it has learned from experience to take seriously. However, some Arab diplomats dismissed the Iraqi threats as mere rhetoric and said it was inevitable that Baghdad would take this stand against Kuwait for allowing itself to be used as a launching pad for strikes against Iraq.

An Arab envoy in Jordan said: "It's a hollow threat. Saddam's army is not capable of moving against Kuwait and without air cover would be bombed to bits before it could ever reach the border." As the United States mustered its biggest show of air power against Iraq since the Gulf War, Baghdad insisted that it would try to shoot down any American, British and French warplanes flying over its territory.

"Iraq will continue defending its national air space," Abd-al-Ghani Abd-al-Ghaffur, Iraq's information minister, said. After the American cruise missile strikes on southern Iraq last week, Saddam said he would no longer honour the "damned imaginary" no-fly zones and any attacks on allied warplanes were legitimate acts of self-defence.

□ Aid warnings: British aid workers are trying to carry on their missions in dangerous and difficult conditions in northern Iraq, some with little or no means of contacting the outside world (Eve-Anne Prentice writes). Save the Children is so worried about its personnel that it refuses to say how many workers are in the area. "We have 200 people in the country but we don't want to go into numbers around Arbil and Sulaimaniya because we are really concerned and do not want to compromise their safety," a spokeswoman said.

Republican sniping, page 14



Gerry Adams greets Mary Robinson during a visit by the President of the Irish Republic to west Belfast yesterday. The two shook hands for the first time in public at the end of a visit to a youth development project at a school on the Upper Springfield Road (Nicholas Watt writes).

The brief meeting took place at a spot in the school assembly hall which appeared to have been arranged between Sinn Féin and the presidential party. The Sinn Féin president welcomed Mrs Robinson to Belfast in Irish before she moved on. The handshake was

seen last night as part of a concerted attempt by Dublin to endorse the Sinn Féin president after the disturbances in Northern Ireland during the marching season. Dublin believes that Mr Adams heads a "peace camp" within the republican movement, and that he should be

encouraged in his apparent efforts to restore the IRA ceasefire. In Washington on Wednesday John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, appealed to the IRA to restore its ceasefire. After the visit, Mrs Robinson played down the significance of her meeting. She said she

had no role in the political discussions, which allowed her to meet people in their work at a community level. "It was in that context that I met Gerry Adams," Unionists reacted furiously when Mrs Robinson shook hands with Mr Adams in private in Belfast in 1995.

Fresh opposition to 48-hour week

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS AND PHILIP WEBSTER IN LONDON

BRITAIN yesterday promised to resist fresh proposals from the European Commission that would impose a 48-hour week on workers exempted from European Union legislation. Ministers pledged to intensify their efforts to close loopholes through which they claim Brussels is imposing the social chapter in Britain. They said they would fight plans that could limit the working time of transport employees, hospital doctors and others who are exempted from the controversial directive imposing a 48-hour week. The Government has appealed against the measure. Downing Street made plain last night that John Major would not sign up to agree-

ments in the current inter-governmental conference unless the loophole that allowed Brussels to bring forward matters governing employment rights under health and safety legislation was closed. Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, said that the latest Brussels move was another example of how important it was to resist the encroachment of the EU into employment matters. The TUC yesterday welcomed the plan. John Monks, its General Secretary, said: "I strongly welcome the EC's move to limit transport workers' hours. Tired and stressed-out drivers are a danger to the public as well as themselves."

The EU Commission confirmed that it was working on a longstanding plan to extend the working time directive. The main workers affected would be those in railways, airlines, road haulage and shipping. Junior hospital doctors could also be covered because, unlike those in most other EU states, they are employees rather than students. British workers are more affected by any working hour limits than those in other states because, on average, they work the longest hours in western Europe.

The Government is fiercely opposed to the whole principle of the working directive, passed in 1993 by majority voting after long negotiation in which the Government won broad exemptions. Britain abstained. However, it reversed its approach and challenged the law in the European Court of Justice last spring on the ground that the measure, which comes into effect in November, was wrongly passed under the heading of health and safety. The Government says the directive breaches the spirit of its opt-out from the social chapter, the protocol to the Maastricht treaty covering employment conditions among the 14 other member states.

End of the road for Transport Department

By VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

THE Department of Transport seems certain to disappear, whether the Conservatives or Labour win the general election. Senior Whitehall officials have considered for some time that the department no longer has sufficient functions to warrant its status as a separate department of state. With the privatisation of British Rail and the creation of agencies to deal with the highways, maritime safety and coastguards, they believe remaining policy functions could easily be transferred.

The most likely option is for roads, planning and road safety policy to be reintegrated with the Department of Environment, and for aviation, shipping and matters concerning the regulation of the private transport companies to be moved to Trade and Industry. Such a move fits in with the Government drive for a slimmer central bureaucracy. But the interesting development is that senior Labour politicians are also now discussing the abolition of Transport as a separate Cabinet portfolio. A source close to Tony Blair, the Labour leader, confirmed last night that Claire Short was told about the likelihood of Transport losing its Cabinet status when she was moved to the Overseas Development brief.

Unions demand more rights than Labour wants to offer

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

TRADE unions again challenged Labour hopes of transforming industrial relations yesterday, demanding rights beyond what a Blair government would grant. At the Trades Union Congress, meeting in Blackpool, Tony Dubbins, general secretary of the Graphical, Paper and Media Union, criticised Labour for failing to guarantee the full restoration of trade union rights removed by the Conservatives. The TUC's demands for increased employment laws come as Labour makes clearer its proposals to reform industrial legislation, floating plans for binding arbitration for disputes involv-

ing public sector services. Visits to the TUC by Tony Blair, the Labour leader, and David Blunkett, the Shadow Employment Secretary, made plain the distance that new Labour is prepared to put between itself and the unions. The TUC yesterday overwhelmingly endorsed a call for employment rights from the first day of employment; rights for all workers to be represented by a union; union recognition to be legally underwritten if union membership is more than 50 per cent of a workplace bargaining unit; recognition to cover all collective bargaining; laws to ban the dismissal of workers who join legitimate disputes; the right to take solidarity action; limits on flexible hours

contracts; and the banning of zero-hour contracts which offer no guarantee of work. Labour recently declined to confirm a pledge made by the late John Smith when he was Labour leader that employment rights would start on the day a person started a job rather than the current requirement of two years. The party said it was seeking clarification of a European case. It is that thought a one-year requirement is likely. Mr Dubbins also criticised Labour for plans to require ballots over recognition where unions can already claim more than 50 per cent membership. He said the plan was "cumbersome, bureaucratic, and, at the end of the day, I believe it would be unwork-

able." Alan Johnson, of the Communication Workers' Union, whose Royal Mail membership is involved in a series of strikes, told the TUC: "The question of if, when and how many times we ballot is a matter for us." However, a call from Arthur Scargill, president of National Union of Mineworkers, to refuse to work within union legislation was defeated. Mr Scargill, who has left Labour and set up his Socialist Labour Party, condemned the spirit of co-operation called for by John Monks, TUC general secretary, in his keynote speech to the conference earlier this week, and dismissed new unionism as "old-style sell-out".

Mouths where their money is

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR'S caution over severing links with the unions has been largely due to its dependence on their financial support. In 1995 the unions contributed £6.8 million, 54 per cent of the party's £12.5 million income. In 1996, union funding represented 77 per cent of party income and Labour sources claim the proportion is still dropping as more donations come from business and party members. The 1995 accounts show that fundraising raised 18.6 per cent of income and membership 16 per cent. Fundraising includes one-off donations from some larger unions. Those unions who have already contributed over £5,000 as one-off gifts include

Workers Union, Unison, the public sector union, the GMB general workers union, the AEEU engineering union and the CWU communications union. Unions provide £4.5 million in affiliation fees. Many give unspecified amounts to individual MPs for their costs. Direct sponsorship of MPs has ended but unions give money to MPs' constituencies. Unions also have a significant role in policy-making, although this has been significantly reduced under Tony Blair's leadership. Twelve of the elected members of the national executive committee, Labour's ruling body, are union leaders and unions have a key role on the national

and approves important policy documents. Unions still effectively have a 50 per cent block vote at the annual party conference, which has reduced from 70 per cent since Mr Blair became Labour leader. Although individual delegates now technically have their own vote at the party conference, many union leaders still tend unofficially to mandate their delegates on the eve of crucial votes. The unions hold 33.3 per cent of the vote in the electoral college for leadership elections. But perhaps the most significant contribution the unions give is their campaigning work for general elections. They have a huge network of

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هكذا من الأصل

It's all over till the thin lad sings again

WHY are Oasis so cool? Because by always being one punch away from splitting up they have kept their fans in a state of permanent anxiety. One would hazard that the reason 5 per cent of the population applied for tickets to this summer's Knebworth gigs was the very real fear that there would not be any Oasis gigs next year.

The urgency of Oasis's music is matched only by the rapacious speed at which the band is ticking off career moves from *The Big Rocker Roll Handbook*: controversial girlfriends, drugs, drink, fights, hotel wrecking, numerous drummers, public break-ups and even more public reconciliations. In an industry where every move, angle and scam is planned a year in advance, Oasis have reintroduced unpredictability: and the public's gratitude for this rare excitement is expressed in sales of 9.5 million copies of *What's The Story?* Morning Glory?

However, the emotional toll of living the life of a mega-pop star is enormous. "You wanna try being me and [Liam] for an afternoon. You'd slit your own throat, mate," Noel Gallagher told *Select* magazine in Au-



Despite the acrimony and the walkouts, we are unlikely to have heard the last from Oasis, says Caitlin Moran

gust. Well, life certainly hasn't got any easier for the brothers since then. After a blazing row with Liam, Noel has flown back to England, cancelling the ill-fated tour. Their record label, Creation, has issued a statement neither confirming nor denying that the band has split up, and all the rest is rumour.

However, it's not like this is a freakish event. Noel has walked out on the band before — last year's American tour saw him go missing on a five-day hedonism spree before he calmed down and rejoined the band. Last Christmas saw numerous press reports heralding the end of Oasis; Liam walked out on the band during a recording of *Later With Jools Holland*. In the following furor, it was mooted that Robbie Williams, the minx from Take That, would be joining the band as Liam's replacement. Of course, this didn't happen. Even the band's first major interview, with the *New Musical Express*,

saw Noel break a chair over Liam's head.

The recently published *What's The Story?*, by former tour manager Ian Robertson, was a hugely entertaining Who's Hitting Who, cataloguing Oasis's many spats and brawls on tour.

The band has not been out of the tabloids for two years now — two years of telephoto lenses trained on their toilets; journalists sleeping on their doorsteps; fans ripping their hair out and every quote analysed for scandal/wisdom/inadvertent insight.

In the past month alone, Oasis have had front pages recording Liam's engagement to Patsy Kensit, his sudden quitting of the American tour to find a house, his alleged visits to a psychiatrist and his spitting at the audience at the MTV video awards in New York. Coupled with this, ticket sales at several of the venues on the American tour have been disappointing — more than enough to make any pop star, however hard and rockin' he is, to want to go home to his mum for a bit.

I would hazard a guess that, after the initial shock headlines, Noel and Liam will have a chat, have a bit of a fight, have a couple of drinks, one more fight for the road, and then start planning next year's album. All of this has happened before — and it will happen many times again before the cries of "Wolf!" are for real.



They love each other really: Liam and Noel Gallagher with the less demonstrative members of the band

Oasis tour abandoned after row

Continued from page 1

Hopkins said in a statement: "Oasis have hit internal differences on their ninth tour of America which has resulted in the tour being pulled two-thirds of the way through. It is unlikely that immediate touring commitments will be fulfilled."

If successful the tour was to have elevated Oasis to the superstatus alongside the Gallagher's heroes, The Beatles. Ironically, The Beatles performed their

last concert in America in San Francisco in 1966 and never toured again. The legendary punk band the Sex Pistols also split up while touring in America.

If Oasis do disband it will be the second major blow to the British pop industry in less than a year. Take That, which achieved worldwide fame and almost revived the moribund singles market, also split up soon after Robbie Williams left the band.

Last night a red-eyed Noel Gallagher refused to say a word as he arrived at London's Heathrow airport. After stepping off a Concorde flight from New York, he walked with his head down through Terminal 4's arrival lounge accompanied by a bodyguard, and was met by two more minders.

One source said Noel left after a five-hour "summit meeting" called by himself and his brother at their hotel.

Jet bomb hoaxer faces bill of £100,000

By HARVEY ELLIOTT
AIR CORRESPONDENT

A BOMB hoaxer who forced an American Airlines jet to turn back to Britain in mid-Atlantic faces criminal prosecution and a civil action for the estimated £100,000 cost of the diversion.

The Boeing 767 from Heathrow to Chicago was 400 miles out over the Atlantic when a passenger found a handwritten note that had fallen from the seat-back pocket in front. It contained a warning that a bomb was on board.

Police and airline officials do not think a passenger on the diverted flight was involved. They are combing records of previous flights to find the culprit.

As it contained references to Lockerbie, the captain returned to the nearest airfield, more than an hour away at Glasgow. Passengers were taken off and the jet searched, but nothing was found.

American Airlines said that extra fuel, landing charges, hotel accommodation for passengers and disruption to the crew's rosters and aircraft schedules had cost at least £100,000. "We are now discussing with lawyers whether we are able to sue under either British or American law."

The passengers left Heathrow yesterday 26 hours late. They will receive refunds which the hoaxer would be sued for. Criminal charges would bring at least seven years' jail.



Public interest generated by their uncertain future has generated massive sales of Oasis's albums

Which? test helped gang to steal cash

By TIM JONES

THE consumer magazine *Which?* unwittingly helped a former bank security consultant to steal £130,000 from "hole in the wall" cash machines, it was alleged yesterday.

Andrew Stone, 30, was given the perfect cover to try out his plan when the magazine asked him to test his theory about security flaws, Southwark Crown Court was told.

Which?'s interest was legitimate when, in 1994, it gave Stone the name of an account and permission to see whether he could gain access to it. Michael Holland, for the prosecution, said: "The beauty of it for him was that he got a dry run and, if he was caught, he had a perfect explanation."

Once Stone had established that his scheme worked he began in earnest to steal substantial amounts of money. Mr Holland said. He and his accomplices toured the country looking for Abbey National cash machines that were overlooked by premises they could rent.

Then they used two video cameras to film customers making transactions. One was trained on the customer's fingers to identify his or her personal number. The other filmed the card.

Mr Holland said that the gang would then spend days collating the results and matching the numbers to account details. This enabled them to manufacture scores of forged cards that enabled them, at their leisure, to empty accounts by amounts of up to £250 a time.

Stone, of Fairham, Hampshire, has admitted conspiracy to steal and will be sentenced later. A co-defendant, aged 47, who cannot be named for legal reasons, denies taking part in the plot. Other gang members have not been caught.

The trial continues.

Stalker ruined my life, woman tells court

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A YOUNG woman fought back tears in the witness box yesterday as she told a man accused of stalking her for four years that he had ruined her life.

Sitting only feet apart in the crowded courtroom, Margaret Bent, 30, a cafe manageress, refused to look at Dennis Chambers as she said he had taken over her life. "My mind is not my own at the moment," she said.

Mr Chambers, 37, a delivery van driver, denies causing grievous bodily harm with intent, grievous bodily harm and affray. Miss Bent twiddled her hands nervously and stared straight ahead as Mr Chambers, who is representing himself, left the dock and sat on benches normally reserved for lawyers as he prepared to conduct his defence.

Miss Bent told Inner London Crown Court that she had lost weight, lost sleep, felt ill and taken up smoking because of the psychological stress caused by Mr Chambers. She claims he followed her home nearly every day and pestered her with thousands of phone calls, as well as threatening her with a knife. She had told the jury: "When I see him it makes me feel scared, worried, sick."

Mr Chambers accused her of lying, saying: "I have never caused her GBH, that's what I'm trying to get at."

Quentin Campbell, the Recorder, told Miss Bent that Mr Chambers' case was that he had not caused her "serious psychological injury". Miss Bent said: "He would not know, he would not know what's happened to me because he's never spent any time in my company. He didn't know me before and he doesn't know me now."

Asked by the judge if her stress was due to other prob-

lems in her life, she replied: "My life is not my own at the moment. I am constantly thinking about what he is going to do next. I am constantly walking down the street thinking 'What is going to happen to me?' and always looking behind me. So no, no."

Miss Bent, from Brixton, south London, told the court that her ordeal began in 1992 when Mr Chambers walked up to her in the street and tried to pick her up. Despite making it clear she was not interested, he would not take no for an answer.

In the years that followed he followed her home from work several times a week and repeatedly called her at the restaurant. Towards the end of 1994 he became aggressive. He registered his car in her name so that she received a string of parking tickets, court summonses and threatening letters from bailiffs.

Mr Chambers was arrested in March after Miss Bent called the police from her cafe. She said she had locked herself in her office after he went into the cafe armed with a 10-inch blade and threatened to kill her. The trial continues.



Margaret Bent said her mind was not her own

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Village uproar after fête visitor cries 'cheat' at tombola stall

By ROBIN YOUNG

THINGS suddenly turned nasty at the village fête when a visitor accused the organisers of rigging the tombola. First the police were called, then the local trading standards department.

Locals at Apperley, population 460, on the banks of the Severn near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, appalled by the row, insist that they had done nothing wrong.

The trouble started when Leonard Morton, of Swindon, Wiltshire, noticed that few prizes were being won. He

this won him only one cigarette lighter and a bar of soap, he accused the stall's owners of working a scam, because there were many prizes left displaying blue tickets.

Temper and voices were raised and Mr Morton, 50, a charity worker, stormed off to the police in Cheltenham, who referred it to the trading standards department.

Mr Morton said yesterday: "It seemed strange that all those prizes were sitting there and nobody was winning. So I bought all the blue tickets. Surprise, surprise, there were still about 14 prizes with blue tickets left. It was

denied any wrongdoing but suggested that some tickets might have "blown away". The parish council chairman, William Morris, said: "It was all above board. There was a general muddle when the lid fell off the tombola barrel. It was a breezy day and some of them may have blown away."

Peter Myers, a solicitor from Apperley who helped to run the tombola, said: "The reason prizes were left was that some people had kindly not claimed them. They were given out at the end. People like him make me sick."

Tewkesbury environmental health department said

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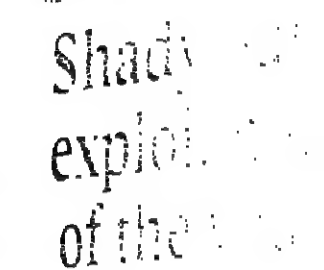
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Trusted former policeman preyed on the ambitions of teenage girls who were lured to his home

Model agency rapist gets 20 years

By KATE ALDERSON

THE head of a model agency who drugged and brainwashed teenage girls at his home was jailed for 20 years yesterday for a series of rapes and assaults.

Peter Martin, 56, a former policeman, was of the most prolific sex offenders to appear before the courts in Britain. He also provided girls for the football and media tycoon Owen Oyston, who was jailed for six years in May for raping and assaulting a 16-year-old model delivered to his home by Martin.

As the portly, bearded agency chief was led up from the court cells to hear the jury's verdicts yesterday, he leered and winked at the public gallery, where some of his victims were sitting. Moments later he stood, ash-faced, one hand hooked into the back of his jeans, as the jury foreman returned the first of a string of guilty verdicts over six rapes and five indecent assaults stretching over 13 years.

There were gasps of relief from the gallery. The cases involving girls aged 13 to 18 were only specimen charges, chosen from a total of 64, including 19 rapes.

During the two-month trial, the jury was told that girls went to his

agency in Sale, Greater Manchester, hoping for glamorous careers. Instead they were brainwashed into obedience, fed hypnotic drugs under the pretence that they were slimming and vitamin pills, and indecently assaulted before Martin forced them to have sex, usually just after their sixteenth birthdays.

Many still suffered nightmares and emotional disturbances. Judge Brian Carter, QC, said: "The parents of the girls involved trusted you and relied on you to look after their daughters, starting at your agency well under the age of 16 in some cases. You emphasised to the parents that you were an ex-police officer and therefore could be trusted."

"The girls were ambitious to become successful models and you took advantage of them in a deliberate and premeditated way. You not only destroyed their youth and innocence, you deprived them of a normal happy and healthy adult life."

"You denied all these offences and required the complainants to give evidence and relive their experience. It is difficult to think of a worse case of its type."

Martin's home became known



Martin's former girlfriend, Tracey Grainey, was cleared. Right, the Model House, where up to 20 girls stayed at once



met Oyston in 1987 after the tycoon's daughter, Dawn, went to his agency to do a stint at modelling. Martin introduced girls to Oyston, saying he was a powerful friend who could be useful in their careers.

Police began investigating after two girls complained to their aunt of being groped by Martin. A detective said: "We broke in to find Martin dangling from the loft, hiding a load of videos."

When detectives saw videos of businessmen having sex with teenage girls, they believed that they were dealing with a blackmail case. However, after the publication of Martin's arrest, more girls filed complaints. In a five-month investigation, there were also allegations against Oyston.

Martin told the court that his house merely had a "fun atmosphere" adding: "It was high spirits or everyone having a good time or people being reckless or people being sexual."

Martin's former lover and assistant, Tracey Grainey, 30, was cleared of all four sex charges against her. Miss Grainey, a successful model who was seduced by Martin at the age of 16, wept uncontrollably as the verdicts were delivered.

as the Model House. Up to 20 girls would stay at one time in a "strange, perverted family situation," Helen Grindrod, QC, prosecuting, told Manchester Crown Court. The girls, who attended modelling classes at weekends, could not use the telephone or go out without permission. Friendships, boyfriends and contact with families was discouraged. Many were given tablets which they were told would relax them, but made them sleepy and zombie-like. Girls became aware of

the importance of their sixteenth birthdays, because then Martin regarded them as fair game. The sex was often violent, involving hair-pulling and face-slapping. Sometimes they were bound and gagged. Many former models spoke of feeling brainwashed.

Mrs Grindrod said: "His favourites were made the subject of outbursts of anger and humiliation in front of the others. In their innocence, they strove harder to please the boss, the man who held the key to their future." He

Shady outfits exploit hopes of the young

By KATE ALDERSON

THE model agency run by Peter Martin was registered for most of its existence but, according to police, the registration was always in someone else's name.

Until January 1995, all modelling agencies had to be registered with the Department of Employment. Today, modelling agencies, like all employment agencies, are circumscribed by the Employment Agencies Act, 1963. The rights of young girls working for a modelling agency are similar to those of an adult, and inspectors investigate complaints.

Under the 1963 Children and Young Persons Act, any person under 18 who is taking part in a performance to be filmed or broadcast, or a theatrical performance — which could include a modelling show — must be chaperoned. When a child or teenager is involved in stills photography there is no such requirement, according to the Department of Health. A spokesman said: "Parents should be taking care that the person looking after their child is a reasonable person and should take steps to find out about them."

Laurie Kuhrt, chairman of the Association of Model Agents, said the world of bona

fide modelling agents was small. "I have been in the business for 30 years and there has never been an incident, even a trivial one, within the AMA."

"Unfortunately, the model business is capable of being exploited and outside the bona fide business there are people operating so-called agencies and schools and all kinds of other spin-offs. The usual motivation is to encourage aspiring models to part with their money — and they rarely get them work."

"Some will entice girls in for sinister reasons. These agents take advantage of the fact that young people have stars in their eyes and they are extraordinarily gullible." The association's members must have been trading for at least two years, provide evidence that they are getting suitable work for their models, and demonstrate high standards of working practice.

Elisabeth Smith, who runs her modelling agency in London and specialises in finding work for children, teenagers and families, said: "People should never, ever answer an advert for modelling in the newspaper. No reputable agency needs to advertise."

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In our quest to combat the worst excesses of meddling mediocrity, may we relay this biblical tale. Centuries ago there was a freshwater fish from Galilee who, after literally coughing up a coin or two for St. Peter to pay some Roman bureaucrats, was rewarded with the name St. Peter's fish.

Fast forward to 1996 and in their earnest desire to regulate just about everything, today's bureaucrats have ruled that the poor fish has now to be 'de-canonised' and renamed *St. Peter's fish*, its Roman name.

As they clearly point out, 'If there is a name prescribed by law for a food, that is to say if a particular name is required to be used for the food, that name shall be used for the food'.

Despite this clarity they then ruled that a seawater fish, that most of us call John Dory, can now be called St. Peter. Confused? So too will be anyone asking for St. Peter's fish down at Tesco.

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Here endeth the lesson.



Psychologists extol benefits of divorce for all the family

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

DIVORCE can benefit parents and children by increasing their self-reliance and giving them control over their lives, psychologists said yesterday.

The breakup of the traditional nuclear family is not as big a disaster as it is painted. Although single parents may have more to cope with, they experience greater rewards, mothers have a sense of achievement over doing a difficult job and children report a feeling of love and security no matter who provides it, according to research in London and Lancaster.

Dr Ann Woollett, who presented a symposium "Positive perspectives of divorce and single parenthood" to the British Psychological Society's developmental section conference in Oxford yesterday, said that, by the end of the century, nuclear families would be outnumbered by stepfamilies and single-parent families.

"Divorce is clearly an unpleasant and painful experience. But there are some more positive aspects. There was a sense that with more responsibility comes more reward. Some women said, 'Yes, we are hard up, but at least now we know what is happening.' If they had been in a stressful relationship with a man who was often not around or spending the household

money they did not feel that much worse off because they no longer had to cope with the unreliability."

Dr Woollett and Patsy Fuller, of the University of East London, interviewed 35 single mothers living in east London. "We wanted to find out what divorce feels like for mothers and children. It often seemed that the mothers were singing that Gloria Gaynor song 'I Will Survive'."

"They had come through a painful experience, were working very hard under difficult circumstances and were proud of what they had

Home care is best for baby

Children who have been cared for in crèches or day centres from before the age of one are more likely to develop problems in co-operating with other children than those who have been looked after at home, University of Milan researchers told the conference.

"These results suggest that, at least for some children, when relationships with parents are impoverished due to early and extended group care in infancy, the growth of some social abilities relevant to moral development may be problematic."

achieved. The children felt loved and were proud of their mums," Dr Woollett said.

In a second study, conducted at Lancaster University, 76 mothers from separated and married families with a child aged between one and two were compared. The researchers, Dr Cheryl Kier and Dr Charlie Lewis, found that, although the separated mothers had faced greater difficulties in the past year, they also saw them as having a positive effect. Separation was a "subtle balance" of disadvantages and gains for the parent who had custody of the child.

Dr Woollett, 51, whose second marriage has lasted 20 years, admitted that the findings flew in the face of research showing that divorce disadvantaged children. "We are not trying to say that divorce is a good thing, but there are ways of coping. We were not looking at performance. We were trying to see what divorce is like from the inside for those going through it. So much of the research has been from the outside, looking at measures of behaviour and achievement."

"If there is a political message in these findings it is that we ought to think more about how we support couples so marriages don't break down, and support single parents when they do."



Kent Nagano rehearsing the Hallé for the first night at the Bridgewater Hall

Hallé's new home earns mixed reviews

By KATE ALDERSON AND MARCUS BINNEY

MANCHESTER'S new £42 million concert hall opened to mixed notices from the critics but a resounding welcome from most of its first-night audience.

Some reviewers thought the Hallé Orchestra's performance of works by Elgar, Walton and George Benjamin at the Bridgewater Hall lacked body and presence. Gerald Larner, writing in *The Times* today, said that the Hallé sounded remote from his seat in the gallery. Others said that the strings had to compete with heavy bass and called for adjustments to the acoustics.

But for the rest of the audience, sprinkled with civic leaders and sponsors, the ovation suggested that the sound was quite good enough. Michael Bukht, Classic FM's programme controller, whose station broadcast the concert conducted by Kent Nagano, declared the hall the best venue in Britain. It is the new home of the Hallé, formerly housed in the Free Trade Hall, and is the performance base of the BBC Philharmonic and Manchester Camerata.

Mr Bukht said: "The opening night was one of the finest concerts I think we have ever broadcast. On every level, as a piece of equipment, it works for the audience and the players."

Nicholas Payne, the opera director at Covent Garden, praised the vivid sound. "Hats off to Manchester. The sound

was both clear and rich. The whole performance was an unqualified success and the clever design means you are close to the orchestra."

The Hallé members said that they were very happy with the acoustics of their new home, which seats 2,400 and has taken three years to build. A pioneering feature are the springs it sits on, designed to eliminate noise from Metro-link trams.

With concert hall acoustics such a contentious issue, Arup Acoustics, who worked on the Bridgewater, sought to achieve a mix of the two classic

Distant voices, Review, page 31

types of auditorium, the shoebox and the vineyard. The shoebox, with balconies around the sides, has a maximum capacity of about 1,500 before acoustics suffer. For larger halls, the vineyard form is considered preferable, with the audience split into separate seating areas, each with walls behind to provide early reflections.

An Arup spokesman rejected criticism that the acoustic was bass heavy. "Many halls in Britain are quite dead at bass frequencies. Strong bass acoustics are not common this country, but we are quite happy. The cello in Bridgewater Hall sounds fantastic."

Josie's memories of murders need to be prompted gently

AN INJURY severe enough to produce unconsciousness normally results in amnesia about the events immediately before the injury.

Josie Russell, the survivor of the fatal attack in Kent on her mother, sister and dog, is unusual in that tests carried out during her gentle questioning by the police have demonstrated that her memory is good.

Josie's reaction to pictures of her early life clearly indicates that her long-term memory is unaffected. The police think that her recollection of the murder is also intact.

The damage to Josie's brain must have centred on the part of the brain that deals with speech. This is very circumscribed, so that the ability to talk can be lost after brain damage but all other intellectual functions remain in working order.

The approach adopted by the police to Josie is arguably not only the best for her future medical condition but also the



MEDICAL BRIEFING

one that is most likely to garner the necessary evidence against the murderer. Dr Mark Berelowitz, a consultant child psychologist at the Royal Free Hospital in north-west London, who is a specialist in treating children who have been physically and emotionally traumatised, said that incomplete memory of an event was always puzzling and therefore distressing to children. Debriefing in an attempt to help their recall could produce immediate signs of anxiety, or the symptoms could be delayed and rather less obvious, such as poor sleep or unaccustomed dependency on those around them.

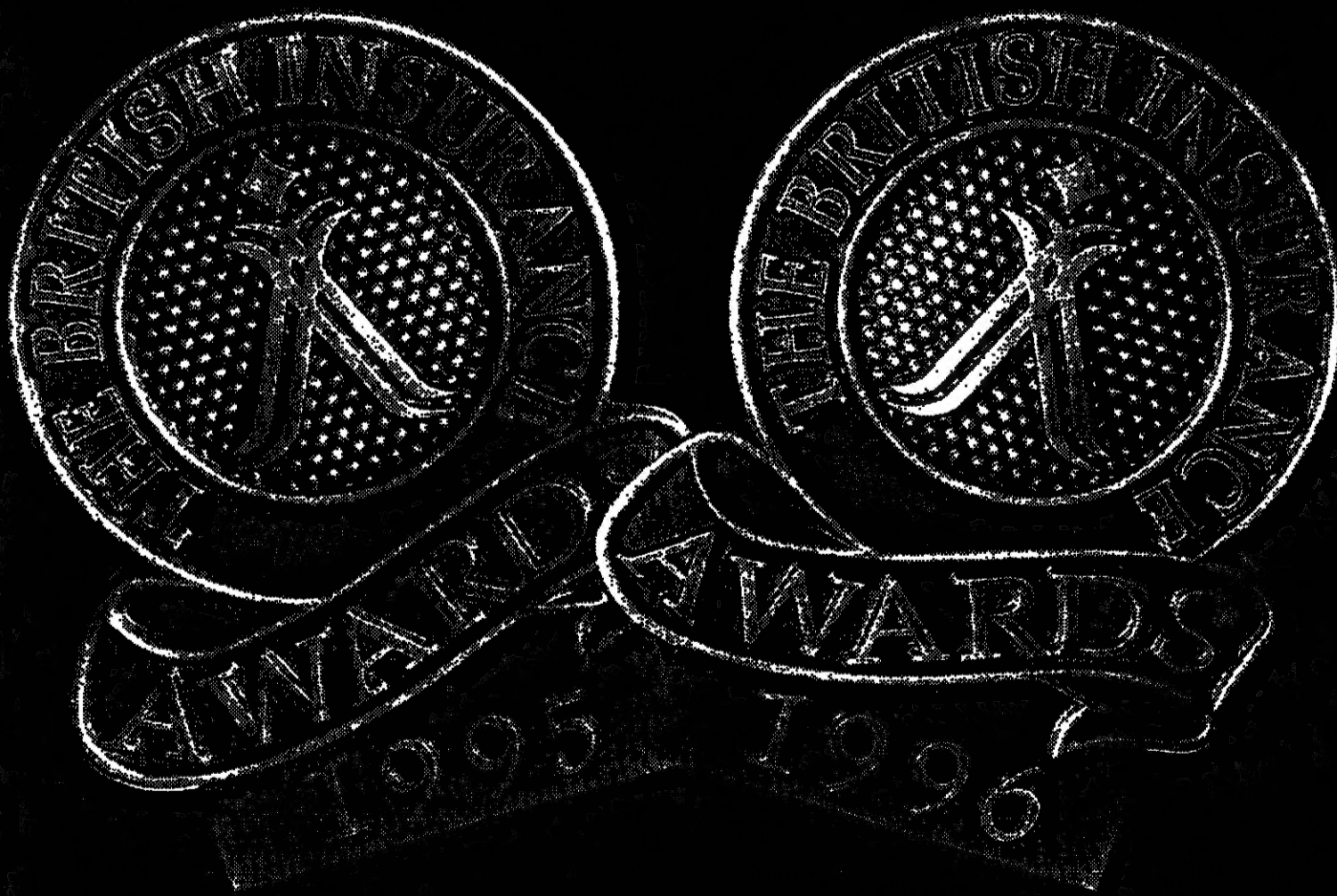
Constant vigilance needs to be exercised to see that a child

is not upset by questioning. The timing of debriefing is all-important. In adult psychiatry, it has been found that attempting to achieve an immediate recall of the events of a disaster is not the panacea it was once thought to be, and can even prove counterproductive to the long-term recovery of those involved.

Research with rescue workers showed those who had immediate, overenthusiastic debriefing after a disaster sometimes fared rather worse than those who were allowed to leave their memories buried in the subconscious for a time.

DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

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Russian archives reveal private world of couple who pledged to be together for eternity

Letters and tragic diary recall love of last Tsar

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE private world of Russia's last Tsar and Tsarina was revealed in detail for the first time yesterday, with the publication of a book drawn from their collected diaries and international royal correspondence.

A *Lifelong Passion* is likely to fuel the revival of monarchical sentiment for Nicholas II. He is now acquiring the aura of a saint in his homeland, as it awaits the much-delayed reburial of his remains and those of his wife, Alexandra, and their family.

His last diary entry, on July 13, 1918, three days before the family's murder by Bolshevik guards, shows his concern for his ailing son: "Alexei took his

first bath since Tobolsk: his knee is getting better, but he still cannot straighten it completely. The weather is warm and pleasant. We have absolutely no news from the outside."

Almost 80 years after guards led by Yurovsky burst into the prison cellar at Yekaterinburg, the diary entries and correspondence with the other crowned heads have been brought together by the historians Andrei Maylunas and Sergei Mironenko. Much of it had been kept inaccessible under Communist rule in the Russian State Archive in Moscow, where Mironenko is the current director.

The book covers almost 40 years of a family that included Queen Victoria, Kaiser Wilhelm, George V and the Kings of Denmark and Greece. Nicholas and Alexandra wrote to each other in English, but the polyglot family also wrote in Russian, French, German and Danish. In 1894, the year of Alexandra's marriage to the Tsar, she wrote in Nicholas's diary: "No more separations. At last united, bound for life, and when this life is ended we meet again in the other world to remain together for all eternity. Yours, yours."

Queen Victoria, who doted



Nicholas and Alexandra: he wrote that "I know all your dear letters by heart". She wrote: "When this life is ended, we meet again"

on Alexandra, her granddaughter, is one of the warmest correspondents. Writing to "Nicky" from Windsor Castle on November 10, 1894, she said: "I was so deeply touched by your dear kind letter and by all your telegrams. Sympathising with the terrible trying and harrowing scenes and last fearful ordeal of the funeral of Tsar Alexander III, she adds: "I need say nothing about your being a good husband to my darling Alix. I know how safe

she is with you and how you will watch over her!" Family life always came first for Nicholas. Thanking his "own precious darling" for a book, *The Iron Pirate*, that she had given him, he said it was the first he had read since his engagement, "but instead I know all your (79) dear letters by heart — after that, what do I care for the rest?"

Russians have long regarded a catastrophe on the day of the coronation as an omen of the doom that was to befall the

family: at least 1,300 people were crushed to death on the Khodynka fields as peasants stampeded to see the new Tsar. He went on to a ball. His uncle, Grand Duke Konstantin, said that Nicholas refused to leave as this would appear "sentimental".

Another of Victoria's grandchildren, Kaiser Wilhelm II, wrote: "Dearest Nicky, God bless you and protect you and dear Alix and give you happiness in your new married life." Twenty years later, their na-

tions were on opposite sides in a war that cost both their thrones.

As the war went badly, the end came and Rasputin was murdered, Nicholas was still writing to "My beloved Wify" and signing off "Ever your own Huzzy". The diary entries during exile in Siberia are terser, detailing the gradual loss of friends, servants, privileges and possessions. They noted what they ate, how the children were faring and the weather. There was little else

they could do. On July 11, 1918, Nicholas noted that "three workmen came up to the open window, lifted up a heavy grill and fixed it to the outside of the frame — without any warning from Yurovsky. We like this man less and less!"

Alexandra noted on July 16: "Every morning the Komendant comes to our rooms, at last after a week brought eggs again for Baby. Played bezique with Nicky. 10½ to bed. 15 degrees." It was the last thing she ever wrote.

Scot loses claim of racial bias

A Scottish police inspector lost his claim that racial prejudice barred him from promotion, Tom Weir, 41, told an industrial tribunal that a British Transport Police superior referred to Scots "climbing back over Hadrian's Wall" and stereotyped him with a warning not to get drunk during lunch.

Police pay up

Mark Brooks, 21, has been awarded £4,500 at Bolton Crown Court for assault and wrongful arrest after he was savaged by a Greater Manchester Police dog then told by officers that it had bitten an Aids patient.

Brewer fined

Carlsberg-Tedley has been fined £10,000 under the Safety of Food Act after an elderly man from north London choked on a piece of broken widgeon. The firm said beer cans were recalled and modified after the incident in May.

Ice not so nice

Dirty ice cubes could be why some drinkers feel ill the morning after. Ice samples from 24 pubs in North and Port Talbot were found by health inspectors to be contaminated. Poor hygiene by bar staff was to blame.

Driver, 71, quits

Ray Evans, a 71-year-old Stagecoach bus driver from Gloucester, has resigned after colleagues threatened to strike over claims that the firm had agreed not to employ anyone over 65. It also employs a driver aged 68.

Car thief killed

A young thief was killed when he crashed a car that he had stolen from a member of a crime prevention team. Matthew Crouch, 16, of Cardiff, died instantly in an 80mph crash after being followed by police.

Painful reminder

A Birmingham woman and her family are terrified of entering their sitting room, where a scorpion is at large despite a four-hour search by firemen. Gwen Jamieson, 47, unwittingly carried it home from Tunisia in a vase.

Death was no barrier to the bureaucrats of ancient China

BY DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

FOR the ancient Chinese, even death could not cut through red tape. Pen-pushing bureaucrats never died; they just continued their activities in the afterlife, scholars have discovered.

The ancient Chinese believed that all the great officials who had died were working together in the under-

world. Writing implements and inventories buried in tombs of the late 5th to 2nd centuries BC provided all the stationery and manuals a bureaucrat might need.

Some of those inventories and implements, including examples from 167 BC, will be featured in the British Museum's exhibition, *The Mysteries of Ancient China*, which opens today. The show has been made possible with sponsorship

from *The Times*. "The idea of a 'hell' composed of bureaucrats is wonderful," said Jessica Rawson, Warden of Merton College, Oxford, the show's academic adviser and one of the leading scholars of Oriental art. These findings illustrate the extent of the ancient Chinese belief in the afterlife. The purpose of tomb-inventories had previously been undervalued, although the ancient Chinese had always used written

texts to communicate with the spirits.

Until now, Dr Rawson explained, scholars had seen them as "more old texts that had survived. They hadn't asked themselves why they were there." The archaeologists looked at the brushes and ink, and the classical scholars looked at the text. It is only if you put them together that you realise their significance. Among those in-

volved in this study has been Donald Harper, a textual scholar at the University of Arizona, who pointed to a vital piece of evidence in a 3rd-century tomb in northwestern China. An account on bamboo slips describes how an unfinished legal case initiated in the world of the living in 297 BC was passed on to the world of the dead, to a figure known to have lived in the 480s BC. Texts include a manual of ceremo-

nial etiquette, an account to the inspector at the underworld gate and a summary of law cases to guide the judging of other cases. The exhibits are among 200 spectacular treasures in jade, bronze and gold that are being displayed at the British Museum until January 5, 1997.

Leading article, page 19
Object of the day, page 31

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Euro-sceptic Tory rebels form party within a party

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Tory Euro-sceptic MPs who became known as the "Whipless Eight" after being cast out of the party for dissent over Europe are to organise themselves into a formal campaign group.

They will be called Conservatives Against a Federal Europe. CAFE for short, and will launch the organisation at the Tory party conference in Bournemouth next month.

In effect the group will become a party within a party.

providing fresh discomfort for John Major, who already faces the prospect of an upsurge in Euro-sceptic dissent at the conference. Several Euro-sceptic groups are planning to hold fringe meetings attacking the Government's European policy.

Although the MPs — Sir Teddy Taylor, Teresa Gorman, Sir Richard Body, Tony Marlow, Richard Shephard, John Wilkinson, Christopher Gill and Nicholas

Budgen — meet regularly and occasionally put out joint statements, they have never formally united in a group.

The MPs, most of whom lost the whip in November 1994 after voting against the Government's plans to increase Britain's contributions to the EU budget, rejoined the party in April last year. They also include Sir Richard, who resigned the whip voluntarily, but Michael Cartiss, one of the original eight rebels, has

recently distanced himself from the group.

They have come under increasing pressure from supporters both in Parliament and the constituencies to form a group that can provide a focus for their anti-European campaign. Euro-sceptics from inside and outside the party will be able to join the group, which will campaign for a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU.

The new group also marks an attempt by the MPs to distance themselves from other Euro-sceptics in the party, especially John Redwood, the former Cabinet minister and party leadership challenger. CAFE will give a much higher profile to the eight MPs, who have been overshadowed over the past year as the Tory party has shifted to the right. As one of the MPs said: "We are all Euro-sceptic these days."

The eight MPs were yesterday uncharacteristically reticent and would not talk on the record about the group until their plans are completed at a meeting on Monday.

However, one said: "If one



Cafe society: seven of the eight MPs, front, Sir Richard Body, Teresa Gorman, Nicholas Budgen and Christopher Gill; middle, Sir Teddy Taylor, Michael Cartiss (who has not joined) and Richard Shephard; back, Tony Marlow

Rightwingers defend the pound

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

SENIOR Tory MPs have launched a fresh campaign to pressurise the Cabinet into ruling out a single currency for the lifetime of the next Parliament.

Tory parliamentary candidates will be asked if they will pledge themselves against scrapping the pound in a survey conducted by Sir George Gardiner, former

chairman of the right-wing 92 Group, and John Townend, chairman of the Tory finance committee and a member of the 1922 Committee executive.

John Major will see the move as another attempt to upset the carefully crafted Cabinet compromise under which the Tory manifesto will leave open the possibility of joining a single currency, but only after a referendum.

But Sir George said yesterday: "It would give us an

immense electoral bonus if it were clear that a majority of Tory candidates opposed joining. Given feeling in the party, it is already fanciful to imagine a Tory Cabinet agreeing to scrap the pound. If a majority of Tory candidates were against, it would be utterly inconceivable."

Individual replies will be confidential but the overall results will be published, possibly around the time of next month's party conference.

goes to Conservative Associations to speak, there is no doubt that there is a unanimous feeling that we don't want a federal Europe. I think therefore that there is a need that those who are of this persuasion should organise together to make sure that

those at the top of the Conservative Party and in Cabinet understand Conservative grassroots opinion and respond."

Another MP said: "We have had so many approaches from party members and the public. The feeling was that we

should try to have some form of organisation." He said that the group was necessary to counter the overoptimistic assessment by other parts of the Tory Right that Euro-scepticism was winning the intellectual argument over Europe. "We really feel that the new

Euro-sceptic Right are giving the wrong impression that something can be done without a referendum," he said. "They are saying that Parliament and the Conservative Government can do something about it, but they are wrong."

Breakaway Labour group to take over Hackney council

By IAN MURRAY, COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR rebels are preparing to seize control of Hackney council in east London after being expelled from the party for forming their own group.

The 17 rebels had their first success yesterday when a special meeting rejected an official group resolution and accepted their motion calling for an independent inquiry into alleged sex abuse by Mark Trotter, a childcare officer who died last year from an AIDS-related disease. There were cheers and shouts of "climbdown" from the new group when the old Labour members did a U-turn and backed the main motion.

At a meeting next Thursday the rebels, with Liberal Democrat and Tory support, are to vote through changes to the council's standing orders that will enable them to oust the leader, John MacCafferty, who has the backing of Labour's national executive.

The breakaway group, Hackney New Labour, also intends to prevent officially approved Labour councillors being chosen to chair committees. It will vote instead for its own group or members of the other two parties. A vote to change the council's leader will follow next month.

Merel Ede, the former depu-

ty leader, said last night: "We are no longer prepared to be pushed round by Walworth Road. Since expelling us from the party on Wednesday, Labour party officials have been going behind the scenes threatening us and ordering us to resign from council committees. They have no right to do that, especially as we are no longer members of their party."

"They are trying to take away our legal rights as elected councillors. It is totally undemocratic and the result of the mess they have got themselves into by interfering in the affairs of Hackney."

The council's chief executive, Tony Elliston, is now choosing someone to hold the independent inquiry into Mark Trotter and his activities in Hackney, including all aspects of his recruitment.

Trotter was a Labour Party activist in Hackney and an agent for the Wick ward at the 1983 general election and council elections. When he died he was on the point of being arrested for questioning by Merseyside police about five cases of child abuse in Liverpool, where he worked in the early Eighties.

Sheila Lawlor, page 18



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Scientists win approval for first TV adverts

By CAROL MIDGLEY

THE Church of Scientology is to begin a television advertising campaign in this country next week for the first time after winning approval for a commercial to be shown on British television.

Visdean Maclean, director of the Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre, confirmed that the commercial had been approved in July. In April the Independent Television Commission lifted a ban on the advertising by the group. The move has been criticised by people who monitor the activities of such groups.

The 60-second advertisement, produced at the group's studios in America at a cost of £70,000, features people from different cultures saying the word "trust". It ends: "On the day we can fully trust each other there will be peace on Earth", and features a telephone number for further information.

The advertisement will run

for a month on the satellite channels UK Gold and UK Living and, if successful, could move to ITV and Channel 4. Religious groups are prohibited by the commission from advertising if their meetings are not open to the public; the group had successfully argued that this was not the case.

The Cult Information Centre expressed deep concern about the advertising campaign. Ian Howarth, the general secretary, said: "I am very concerned for the welfare of anybody who might finish up being interested in going to a Scientology meeting after seeing these advertisements. It is a group about which we are deeply concerned, and always have been, and it is most unfortunate that they have been allowed to go on television. I think the ITC has been most unwise and rather naive in its decision."

The advertisement had to be approved by the Broadcast

Advertising Clearance Centre before being screened. The commission would take action only if a complaint was made after broadcast. In April the commission said it had decided to lift the ban after considering new evidence from an academic source submitted by the Church of Scientology over whether the group held meetings open to the public. At the time, the group said it was pleased that a "discriminatory" ban had been lifted.

Rachael Ryerson, spokeswoman for the Church of Scientology, which denies allegations that it operates as a cult, said yesterday: "It is more of a message than an advertisement. It will get across the values that we stand for and enable people to find out more about us. It is an opportunity to get the message out and let people know we exist. If people don't agree with what we do then there is nothing to get upset about."



Doris Pearson in her Vauxhall Princeton tourer yesterday: worth £60,000 to a collector, but she refuses to sell

Wartime bride keeps her classic act alive

By TIM JONES

DORIS PEARSON is still using the green open-top tourer she first drove more than 50 years ago. Although she has been offered £60,000, she is adamant she will never sell.

The Vauxhall Princeton tourer was already 16 years old when, as a wartime bride, Mrs Pearson was first driven in it by her husband. It has been in the family for 69 years. Her husband, William, a marine engineer who died in 1963, paid £495 for it new in 1927, when the average weekly wage for a labourer was £3.

Yesterday, Mrs Pearson, 87, of Delamere, near Northwich, Cheshire, said: "I love my tourer and could not bear to be without it. It has fond memories. It is known as the Pearson Vauxhall and is still in its original condition."

The 23 litre car, with canvas hood and bulb horn, has covered only 62,900 miles and has never needed a major repair. Mrs Pearson drives another car every day and takes the tourer out only occasionally.

Cult draws praise and damnation

By RUTH GLEDHILL AND CAROL MIDGLEY

THE Church of Scientology has 100,000 members in Britain who often visit its headquarters at East Grinstead, West Sussex. Founded in 1954 by the American science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, it has eight million members around the world.

Hubbard, who died in 1986, claimed to have discovered "Dianetics", promoted as a modern science of mental health. He left more than 500,000 pages of writings and nearly 3,000 tape-recorded lectures.

To his followers, Hubbard was a great writer, artist, philosopher and scientist. Others claimed he was a charlatan, a liar and mentally ill.

In the past, the group has been accused of high-pressure sales techniques and imposing a strict discipline held responsible by the group's detractors for mental breakdowns and suicides. Worried parents attempting to extract their children from membership have used anti-cult groups and kidnappers against the group. The group has also been criticised for the cost of courses that adherents follow.

However, the group, which is particularly concerned to help drug addicts, alcoholics and those with family difficulties, claims it has been a victim of campaigns here and in America. In recent years, with

the adherence of some celebrities, its image has improved.

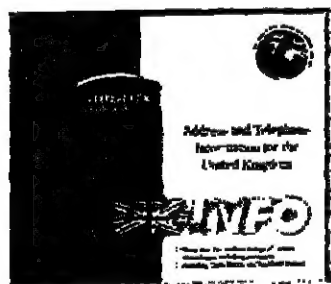
Scientology, which is recognised as a religion in Britain, claims to bring about spiritual improvement through Dianetics. It is argued that man can develop his full potential only by clearing himself of his "reactive" mind, the early painful experiences that cloud his judgment. To the outsider, some of Scientology's concepts seem to have more in common with Hubbard's world of science fiction than with science.

In 1968, Scientologists were banned from coming to Britain after it was claimed that the group posed "a serious danger to health". An inquiry later recommended that the ban be lifted, but this was not done until 1979.



Hubbard: founded the Church of Scientology

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BY JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

Education page 35



By ROBIN YOUNG

The coalition was sold the site as a parting gesture by the Greater London Council. The lower storeys of Oxo Tower Wharf are given over to workshops and five storeys of community housing.



By ROBIN YOUNG

WEEKEND SHOPPING

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Waitrose: stuffed turkey thigh £3.59 for 800g, farmhouse chicken £2.65 for 1.8kg, large potatoes £3.49 for 5kg, Victoria plums SSp a lb, blackberries 90p for 2lb.

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British Association: uncovering the smouldering female psyche and a bubbling molten reservoir

Women find their true, tough selves

REPORTS BY NIGEL HAWKES AND NICK NUTTALL

WOMEN are not the demure, non-violent creatures that men idealise. Although more inclined to verbal than physical violence, women can be just as aggressive as men.

This verdict on her own sex was delivered by Anne Campbell of Durham University at the British Association meeting yesterday. The true nature of women, long hidden by male-generated myths, was finally beginning to express itself, she said.

Referring to the religious icon, rather than the pop idol, she explained: "The Madonna idealisation of the female as devoid of competition or aggression has forced women to deny their own nature." But that was beginning to change.



Campbell: she attacked male-made myths

Recently the incidence of physical violence by girls appeared to be rising, she said. Crime statistics showed that 17 per cent of those arrested for violent behaviour were girls, compared with 10 per cent a few years ago.

The peak age for violence among girls was between 15 and 19, rather younger than men, because of their earlier sexual maturity, she said. The press had described them as "yobettes", propagating the notion that they were attempting to emulate the behaviour of young men under the influence of Hollywood films which presented women in aggressive roles.

Female violence was often seen by men as evidence of psychiatric disorder, she said. Although women constituted only 4 per cent of the prison population, they represented 20 per cent of those sent to psychiatric institutions and special units. Men were unable to handle female violence and labelled it madness.

The same was shown by the frequency with which women charged with murdering their husbands defended themselves by claiming diminished responsibility rather than provocation or self-defence, Dr Campbell said. "It seems that if women's violence cannot be comprehended within a



Not like the Virgin: women are turning from the Madonna's passivity to her pop namesake's assertiveness

male institutional framework, then it cannot be understood at all — and thus constitutes evidence of insanity."

Women should congratulate themselves on controlling violence as well as they did. "While often accused of being sneaky or bitchy, we manage to deal with our disputes

indirectly, often with far less injury," she said. "If it's a choice between going to casualty having your jaw re-wired or somebody saying something nasty behind your back, I know which I would prefer."

The growth of overt violence among young girls could owe something to cultural changes, she admitted. "There may be cultural influences at work such as the aggressive portrayal of females in film and rap music and the emphasis in 'girlie' programmes on television. But we mustn't forget that 90 per cent of violence comes from men."

Women's violence was most likely to be against their children or elderly relatives. There was no evidence of more attacks by women on their partners. Men tended to deny that violence by women was normal, a view that was "congenial to the continuance of male protection and control of women," she said.

Lake of hot rock found two miles under the ocean

BRITISH scientists have found a lake of molten rock beneath the floor of the Atlantic Ocean. The magma chamber, 300 miles southwest of Iceland, lies like a ribbon along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and acts as a reservoir from which new rock is created.

Up to 25 miles long, three miles across and 1,200ft deep, the lake lies two miles below the ocean floor. Dr Martin Sinha, of Cambridge University, told the British Association that pools of liquid rock were an unexpected discovery in an ocean where new crust was being made so slowly.

The Mid-Atlantic Ridge has mountains rising two miles high on either side of a valley 25 miles wide. It is where two of the plates that make up the Earth's crust are being created and separating, spreading outwards at about the same rate as a fingernail grows.

The secrets of this extraordinary place, possibly the most geologically active region on Earth, have been unveiled under the British Mid-Ocean Ridge Initiative (Bridge) supported by the Natural Environment Research Council.

The magma chamber, discovered by seismic and electromagnetic surveying, contains sufficient molten rock to generate new crust for 11,000 years. Dr Sinha believes that the magma chambers may form new crust and then go into dormancy for 100,000 years. Meanwhile, other chambers will have formed along the ridge.

The Bridge project has also thrown light on the strange creatures that live along the

ridge, fed by toxic solutions of salts bubbling up from hot springs known as thermal vents. The project has shown that there may be as many as a few hundred such vents along the ridge, emerging and disappearing all the time.

The vents are home to blind shrimps that teem in millions around them, in stark contrast to the desert-like conditions on the rest of the ocean floor. By towing nets at great depths from the research vessel *Darwin*, Dr David Dixon of Plymouth Marine Laboratory has caught shrimp larvae and found that, unlike the adults, they can see. His belief is that the larvae are able to swim off and seek new vents when the one they have been living around ceases to operate.

Even more extraordinary are the giant tubeworms, a metre long and consisting of little more than a bag full of bacteria which live on the chemicals from ocean sediments. In the Pacific they have been found around vents, but not so far in the Atlantic.

But a few years ago, Dr Dixon said, there was a great surprise when some of these worms were discovered living in the hold of a French cargo vessel, the *Fransois Vielleux*, which sank 20 years ago in 1,500 metres of water 30 miles off Vigo in Spain.

Because the tubeworms feed on sulphides or hydrocarbons, their presence could be used by oil companies searching for places to drill. Where the tubeworms are, there are likely to be "seeps" of oil from which they suck up nutrients through a tube.

Pace of change is blamed for loss of butterfly species

ABOUT a quarter of Britain's butterflies are "addicted" to man-made habitats which are fast disappearing from the countryside, British researchers said.

James Mallet, of University College London, said that up to 15 rare and declining species, including the silver-spotted skipper and the silver-studded blue, had become genetically adapted to habitats such as coppiced woodland and grazed chalk grasslands. Such ancient farming methods dating back 5,000 years, had disappeared within a matter of decades.

"The rate of change had been too quick for the insects to adapt," Dr Mallet said. "Of the 50 species of British butterfly, between 10 and 15 are now known to be addicted to human-created habitats. This is all right if you maintain these landscapes."

In areas such as the South

Downs in Sussex, where grazing once kept the grass under an inch high, sheep farming has declined because it is no longer economic. Grass on the Downs stands around 4in high and many colonies of silver-spotted skippers have become extinct. Surviving colonies are so small that they are at risk of inbreeding.

Tests on downland colonies of the species showed that the



The silver-spotted skipper is declining

loss of "genetic diversity" had already begun, Dr Mallet said. If the genetic pool of such rare species became even more reduced, they were at risk of producing smaller offspring less able to survive.

Dr Mallet said that he had detected similar damage among the remaining pockets of silver-studded blues in North Wales. Many rare fritillaries, such as the high-brown fritillary, were declining because of the loss of coppiced woodland with clearings.

The damage contrasts sharply with commoner species whose fortunes are more linked to weather than habitat. Many have been increasing in numbers after mild winters and dry years.

But Dr Mallet said that this could not offset the loss of rare species: "I grew up running around chalk downlands chasing butterflies. I would like them to be there still."

DRINKING has no safe level and should be curbed by limited opening hours and higher prices, a World Health Organisation expert claimed yesterday.

In a debate on alcohol, Dr Peter Anderson of the organisation's European office, was immediately contradicted by Peter Mitchell, strategic affairs director of Guinness, who said that more than 100 studies around the world had shown clear health benefits from moderate drinking.

Dr Anderson said that the effects of drinking were diffuse and costly and were not confined to a minority of easily identified heavy drinkers. He accepted that alcohol had some benefit in reducing the risk of heart attacks, but this was limited to men over 50 and the benefit could be obtained by as little as one drink every other day.

"Beyond one drink a day there is no further benefit," he said. In populations where heart disease was not a major cause of death, even this benefit counted for little.

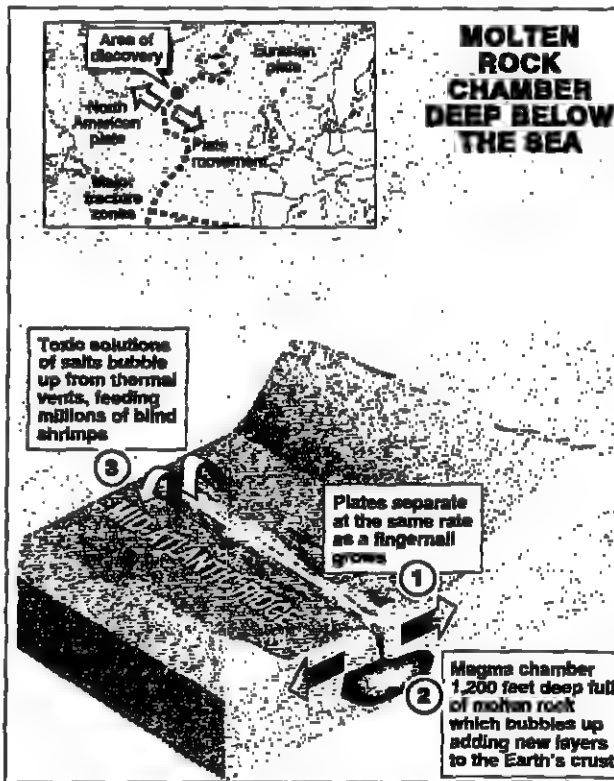
Dr Anderson called for tougher legislation. Education on its own did not work, he said, given the heavy promotion for alcoholic drinks. It needed to be backed by the enforcement of minimum drinking ages and drink-driving curbs, including random breath testing, limits on drinking hours, and higher prices.

Concentrating on problem drinkers would not be enough. The evidence was that the drinking population "behaved as a collectivity" so it was necessary to try to shift the whole population towards lower levels to have any influence on the extreme.

In the debate organised by the Ciba Foundation, Mr Mitchell said that Dr Anderson's argument flew in the face of common sense and was a minority view. The evidence was that three to three and a half drinks a day protected against heart attacks. "Of course misuse of alcohol exists, as it always has," he said. "But 95 per cent of the population drinks sensibly and Britain is not a heavy drinking country, ranking only fourteenth among developed nations."

On average, Britons drank 40 per cent less than their great-grandparents. Department of Health recommendations showed that benefits spread much more widely than middle-aged men. Data from America and Sweden indicated that drinking protected much younger men.

"Education does work," he said, "as we can see from the significant reduction in deaths from alcohol-related road accidents."



Low-fat diet 'could make you suicidal'

BY JEREMY LAURANCE

A LOW-FAT diet may drive people to suicide, scientists claim today. Reducing cholesterol, which is recommended to prevent heart disease, may increase the risk of depression, according to two studies published in the *British Medical Journal*.

The studies are the latest in a series that have appeared over the past two years suggesting that low cholesterol level may be good for the heart but bad for the psyche. However, other experts writing in the same issue of the journal say that the latter suggestion is unproven.

In the first study, more than 6,000 men in their forties and early fifties had their cholesterol measured and were followed for 17 years. It was found that 32 had committed suicide. The risk of suicide for those with low cholesterol was more than three times that of others after taking account of other differences, according to researchers at the National Institute of Health and Medical research in Paris. An

accompanying editorial by S. Lori Brown, senior scientist at the Centre for Devices and Radiological Health in the United States, says that those who committed suicide may have been ill to begin with. "Men who are ill may be depressed and this may have influenced their appetite and hence cholesterol levels."

In a second study, by researchers from Vienna, 20 pregnant women had their cholesterol measured before and after birth, because of the known sudden fall in the levels after delivery. The results showed that those with the sharpest fall in cholesterol were most depressed.

A second commentary, by Malcolm Law, of the Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine in London, says that 13 trials of cholesterol-lowering drugs had shown no increase in depression among those taking them. The debate about a possible link between cholesterol and suicide had been overwhelmed by "irrelevant" evidence.

Professor warns mothers against water-birth 'fad'

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH

PREGNANT women who chose a water birth were engaging in an unnatural practice that may put their child at risk, a professor of obstetrics said. It was a "fad" that would hopefully die out in five years, said James Walker of St James's University Hospital, Leeds, who denied claims that it was natural.

The practice had no anthropological or historical parallel, he said. Only three mammals delivered underwater — the dolphin, the whale and the giant hippopotamus — but no primates and no primitive people had ever used the water birth method.

Professor Walker, speaking at a fringe meeting at the European Congress of Perinatal Medicine in Glasgow, said doctors still did not know the overall risks or specific problems that water births could pose. He felt that mothers needed to be made fully aware of the potential risks to their unborn children.

His arguments were challenged by Konrad Selke, an obstetrician and neonatologist at Barmatz Poliklinik hospital in Bensberg, Germany. He claimed that water birth was "as safe as any other birth" and dramatically reduced the need for pain killers during labour.

But Professor Walker said: "Unlike other methods of natural childbirth, including birthing stool, squatting and delivery on all fours, there is no anthropological or historical data to support water births. I am concerned that water birth is being presented to women without any evidence to support it. They are told it is safe and natural and there is no data to prove this."

There have been about 20,000 water births worldwide. A small number of babies are known to have died from drowning. Other risks include deprivation of oxygen, infection for baby and staff from contact with water containing blood and faeces, and the difficulties in getting the mother out of the birthing pool if there were complications.

"Babies are not dolphins," Professor Walker said. "People argue that it is a wonderful experience, but all births are wonderful. It could be safe if it all went well, but there are no benefits to the baby. It is an eternal gratification thing. We don't know whether it is safe."

Dr Selke, who works at a renowned centre for water births in Germany, said many arguments against water births were based on ignorance. Of the 2,000 water births which had taken place at the centre since 1982, no baby had died.

He claimed that babies had an instinctive "diving reflex" which lasted until they were about four months old. As soon as water touched the skin around the mouth and nose, they held their breath.

The 500-strong audience voted by a majority against water births until further research was carried out.

Rise in gambling addicts 'may fuel crime'

BY RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

MORE than 1.5 million Britons could be addicted to gambling, with it causing serious problems for almost half a million, according to a government report published yesterday.

Its authors warned Home Office ministers that plans to relax gaming regulations would fuel a rise in crime by people desperate to fund their

addiction. Research in several countries shows that an increase in the availability of legalised gambling services is inevitably associated with an increase in the prevalence of problem gambling, the report said. "Studies from a variety of countries also show that the increased accessibility of gambling has led to an increase in crime, including organised crime within casinos and crime resorted to by problem gamblers to fund their habit."

Gamblers' Anonymous sessions in Britain and America were committing crimes at a high level. Fraud, embezzlement, forgery and theft were particularly associated with crime linked to gambling.

The Government is proposing to allow casinos to be set up in 13 towns and to relax the ban on advertising. But the report says that any move to allow casinos to operate outside areas with large populations should be approached with caution. It said that evidence from America showed that

portions of higher levels of problem gambling as a result of allowing casinos into their locality.

It also said that young men were particularly vulnerable to becoming addicted to gambling. Problem gambling was three times more prevalent among males than females and pathological gambling five times more prevalent.

A spokesman for Gamblers' Anonymous said: "The figures in this report must be about right because we believe that four per cent of the population

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Germany turns heat on rich tax-evaders as austerity plan suffers blow

By ROGER BOYES

GERMANY'S upper house of parliament yesterday threw out key parts of the Government's austerity package, but Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, said he was confident that he would be able to override the veto.

The Bundesrat, dominated by the opposition Social Democrats, objected to plans to cut sick pay and reduce worker protection from dismissal, as well as to other pension and health-system re-

forms. "The country needs social reform, not a dismantling of society and a scrapping of workers' rights," Oskar Lafontaine, the Social Democrat leader, told the chamber. "Not a single new job would be created by the changes."

The parliamentary arithmetic, however, favours the Government. If it secures a "Chancellor majority" — amounting to 50 per cent of the deputies plus one — it can overturn a Bundesrat veto. The upper chamber represents the 16 provincial states and is a less

powerful body than Bundestag, the lower house.

The savings package is being debated in parallel to the 1997 budget. Together they form part of a German strategy to cut welfare spending by about £20 billion and generate hundreds of thousands of new jobs. Opinion polls, critical comments from the churches and mass trade union demonstrations suggest that the mood of the country may well be swinging behind the Social Democrats rather than the Government.

Partly to counter this trend, the Government has launched a crackdown on celebrity tax-dodgers. This is supposed to show that the Government wants to balance its calls for tighter belts and public sacrifice with a get-tough policy on the rich.

The latest victim is Willi Weber, manager of the Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher, and the supermodel Claudia Schiffer, who has been fined £100,000 for not declaring the profits from the sale of a Ferrari six

years ago. The most prominent victim is Peter Graf, father of Steffi Graf, the top woman tennis player. He has been in jail for 13 months under investigative arrest for tax evasion. The trial of both he and his financial adviser, Joachim Eckardt, began last week, and although £8 million of outstanding taxes has been deposited by Steffi Graf, they remain in prison.

The loudest victim is Margarethe Schreinemachers, a television talk-show hostess. She lives in and commutes from Belgium to reduce

her German income-tax liability. The television star claims her problems began when she interviewed the first wife of Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister. Their marriage was in trouble. Herr Waigel was in love with Irene Eppler, a ski star, and Frau Schreinemachers gave the crisis unwelcome publicity. Herr Waigel, now married to the ski star, says there is nothing personal involved.

The tax authorities say they are investigating 17,000 cases. Taxmen have raided leading banks and

have accused bankers of helping clients to transfer sums abroad out of reach of the Inland Revenue.

Germany's rich and famous have been discovering the charms of Austria: Franz Beckenbauer, the football manager, Anne-Sophie Mutter, the violinist, and 400 other German millionaires have bought houses in the Tyrol. Naturally they pay tax there, but they avoid Germany's top rate of 53 per cent and the additional "solidarity tax" which raises revenue to rebuild east Germany.



Bossi mobilising his independence 'army'

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

IN THE somnolent towns and villages along the Po, stirring slogans have appeared on the walls of cafes where the men play cards while the broad river flows past the poplar trees.

"Wake up: Bossi is coming," says one. "Long live Padania," says another. "Well," said one bar owner, "at least it will be a show. We are fed up with being ignored by Rome."

The Northern League's "Independence march along the Po" from Turin to Venice, which begins this evening, involves a flotilla of boats, hot-air balloons, fireworks and free spaghetti *alle vongole* as well as rallies and the blocking of Po bridges by coaches. Umberto Bossi, the gravelly-voiced demagogic leader of the League, will fill a phial with the "holy" water from the source of the Po, at Pian del Re in the mountains near Turin, and travel by helicopter and catamaran to Venice, where he will declare the "independence" of northern Italy on Sunday.

Opinion polls suggest that many Italians see this as "buffoonery". The League

gained 30 per cent of the vote in its northern strongholds in the April general election, but has since fared badly in local elections, even in Mantua, the site of the "Parliament of the North". The League's plans for Padania identity cards, stamps and a separate currency are mocked as fantastical.

Even the boundaries of the proposed "republic" are

Umberto Bossi has a private militia of Green Shirts. Is anyone going to do anything about it?

vague. Strictly speaking, Padania means the Po valley, where the 400-mile river runs through or past some of the most picturesque and ancient towns in Piedmont and Lombardy. The League, however, defines "Padania" as stretching from the Austrian border in the north to Umbria, 60 miles from Rome.

Signor Bossi hopes a million and a half people will turn out, forming a human chain, and that many will back secession.

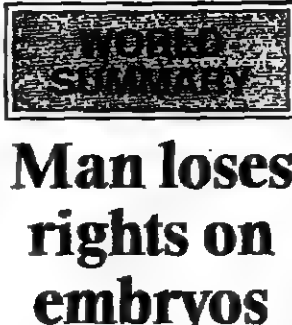
His message appeals to regional pride and many resent rule from Rome. Critics say "Padania" exists only in Signor Bossi's mind. It is not a cohesive unit but a patchwork of former dukedoms and principalities that fused with the rest of Italy in 1870.

Only a fraction of the 3.7 million Italians who voted for the League want secession, but

per cent in the North. Signor Bossi wants to introduce a "northern" lira and has applied to join the single European currency.

There is alarm that Signor Bossi has been allowed to get this far. His 10,000 party stewards wear green shirts, and some are reported to have stockpiled weapons. They are compared to Mussolini's Black Shirts. The magazine *Panorama* last week carried a front-page picture of a Green Shirt wearing a Padania Liberation Committee armband. "Bossi has a private militia," the headline said. "Is anyone going to do anything about it?"

Walter Veltroni, the former communist Deputy Prime Minister, said Signor Bossi had hoped for a hung parliament in which he could hold the balance of power, and had turned to extremism out of desperation after the Left's convincing win in April. "But desperation can conjure up a monster which will be difficult to control," Signor Veltroni said this week. "That has happened before in European history — with tragic consequences."



Man loses rights on embryos

Jerusalem: An Israeli woman yesterday won the legal right to go against the wishes of her estranged husband and have their frozen embryos implanted in a surrogate mother (Ross Dunn writes).

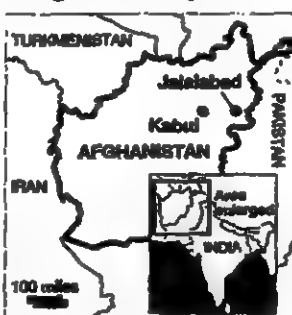
A panel of 11 judges voted seven to four in favour of Ruti Nahmani, saying: "A woman's right to be a parent is stronger than a man's right not to be a father." The judges overturned a ruling by a lower court that Danny Nahmani could not be forced to become a father. His lawyer called the latest decision "a big slap to a man's most intimate parts".

Mrs Nahmani, who had a hysterectomy in 1987, said that she would now look around in earnest for a surrogate mother.

Serengeti gang shoot at tourists

Nairobi: Bandits opened fire on mini-buses carrying 25 Italian and American tourists in the Serengeti game park in Tanzania, before robbing them of cash and valuables, embassy officials said. Two women were airlifted to hospital in neighbouring Kenya with fractures caused by bullets. "It was a very nasty incident," a US embassy official said. "People were clubbed with rifle-butts." The attack came shortly before dusk on Sunday. (Reuters)

Militia seizes Afghan city



The Islamic extremist militia, Taleban, which controls half of Afghanistan, consolidated its capture of the crucial eastern city of Jalalabad (Christopher Thomas writes). The city's fall is a disaster for the Government in Kabul, the nominal capital of a country divided into many fiefdoms. The Government accused Pakistan of aiding Taleban in the seizure of the city, which sits on a vital supply route.

Crash theorists may blow up jet

New York: Air crash investigators may blow up an empty Boeing 747 jetliner to find out what happens when a bomb explodes near the central fuel tank of such an aircraft, one of the theories behind the crash off Long Island of TWA flight 800, in which 230 people died (Quentin Letts writes). Experts believe the disaster to have been caused by terrorists.

High and dry

Khartoum: A Saudi pilot spotted floodwaters, which had engulfed villages, heading for the Sudanese capital. His alert gave troops, civil defence forces and volunteers time to dig a canal and divert the water into the Blue Nile. (AFP)



The young Helmut, escorted by his sister, Hildegard, and older brother, Walter

Tales of young Helmut give image a sparkle

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

HELMUT KOHL, lagging in the opinion polls, has launched a very personal publicity campaign to polish his image. For the first time Germans are discovering intimate facts about the early life of their leader.

Even those close to the Chancellor were unaware that he had an older sister, Hildegard. Yesterday the widow, 74, gave her first interview and commentators were quick to seize on indicators of Herr Kohl's personal motives in seeking European unification. The interview came only a day after a rare appearance by the Chancellor on a German talk-show.

The latest opinion poll, conducted by the Forza Insti-

tute, shows that Gerhard Schröder, the Social Democrat leader, is currently the Germans' favourite for Chancellor (35 per cent), 1 per cent ahead of Herr Kohl. The Christian Democrat-Free Democrat coalition, meanwhile, is level pegging with a national alliance of Social Democrats and Greens.

As popular opposition mounts against cuts and as the Government struggles to maintain its credibility as a good housekeeper, the mood is swinging away from the Chancellor.

Herr Kohl told his advisers that he does not want trumpet fanfares when he overtakes Konrad Adenauer's record stint of 14 years in

office in November. But increasingly the party wants to make the most of this record: the new candour is part of that strategy.

Hildegard reveals that Helmut was an unplanned child. "He was a late arrival — they were difficult times, the world economic crisis was at its high point and in such a situation another child was not exactly what parents longed for," his doting sister told *Stern* magazine. "But Helmut pushed his way through, with all his force. He was always a wild kid." On other occasions, he would dress up in a sheet with a tea-cosy on his head and call himself the Bishop.

War shaped the Chancellor's childhood, giving the emotional backdrop to his controversial statement that forging European political and monetary union is a matter of war or peace. His father was a lieutenant in the First World War, became a modestly paid tax inspector in the years of the Weimar Republic, and was called up as a reservist officer during the Second World War.

"That had a deep effect," said Hildegard of her brother. "At a stroke, at the age of nine, his childhood was in-ched." In 1944 Helmut's 13-year-old brother, Walter, was killed in action.

The lean war years also contributed to the Chancellor's later eating habits. In a stab of candour during his talk-show, he admitted using 18 eggs for his favourite crime caramel. He also confessed that when foreign statesmen call him, he switches on the telephone loudspeaker and feeds the fish in his aquarium.



The Chancellor with his doting sister in 1994

French pupils bowed by book burden

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

WITH the new school term starting in France this week, a familiar sight has returned to the country's streets: small children tottering under the weight of the enormous satchels strapped to their backs.

In many cases these satchels weigh half as much as the pupil and concern over the possible detrimental effects to health has led one politician to propose a new law limiting their weight.

According to Jean-Yves

Haby, curvature of the spine, pressure on the respiratory system and an unbalanced gait can result from regularly carrying loads greater than 20 per cent of one's weight. M. Haby wants to introduce a law limiting a school satchel to no more than 10 per cent of the owner's body weight.

Raphael, an 11-year-old Parisian schoolboy interviewed by *Libération*, set off for his first year at secondary school this week, his spine bent under an unwieldy satchel weighing no less than 28lb, half his body weight and

roughly equivalent to the provisions carried by a soldier on manoeuvres. Valentine, his ten-year-old neighbour, who is less than 4ft tall and weighs about 3½ stone, was in tears after her second day because she could not manage to carry her satchel. Her parents are now forced to ferry her to and from school.

French children carry as many as 20 books around with them throughout the day because schools do not provide lockers or desks where belongings can be stored. Most schools are opposed to the

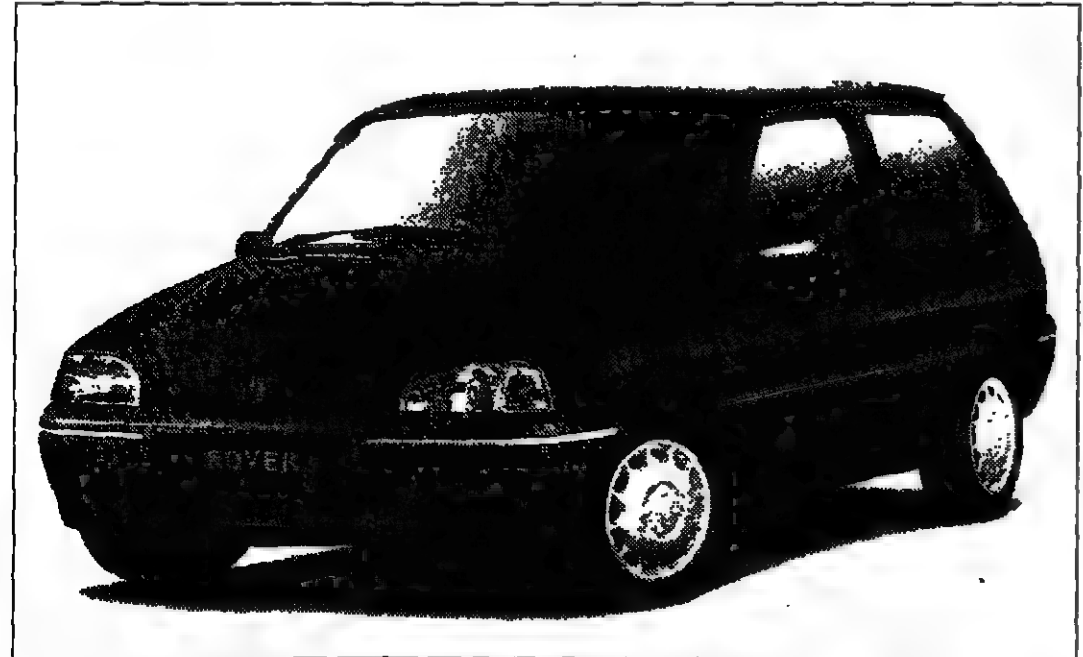
installation of lockers because they say they do not have adequate space or staff to supervise them. Another solution, greatly favoured by the publishers of school books, is to issue two copies of each book to each child: one for home, the other for school.

So far François Bayrou, the Education Minister, has not responded to M. Haby's proposition. But, as *Libération* pointed out yesterday, if M. Bayrou were forced to carry files amounting to half his 11st on his back all day, he might be more sympathetic.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 13 1996

BTR spends £622m on restructuring and cuts payout



Strachan: consolidation

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

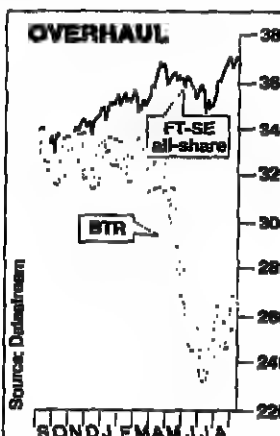
BTR, the diversified industrial company, said yesterday that it is making £622 million of provisions and cutting its full-year dividend by 35 per cent in an attempt to restore the company's flagging fortunes.

The exceptional charges, which cover the costs of the company's restructuring programme, wiped out half-year profits, which fell to £4 million, compared with £729 million last year. BTR said it would push on with its disposal programme, which has already yielded sales of £1.5 billion, also announced the £128.5 million sale of Hawker Siddeley Electric Power Group. The company intends to sell

another 37 businesses in the next 18 months, bringing total disposal proceeds to £2.3 billion. Ian Strachan, chief executive, said the company would also consolidate its 32 existing business divisions into seven business groups. The radical surgery unveiled by Mr Strachan was well received in the City and shares in the company rose 8p to close at 274p. Analysts said that the reshaping was long overdue and supported the cut in the dividend as providing a more sustainable basis for future growth. BTR said the £622 million of exceptional charges included £273 million to cover losses on future disposals and £349 million in restructuring charges.

Of this amount, half relate to reorganisation and closure costs in continental Europe. The interim dividend was reduced 28 per cent to 4p, payable on November 29. BTR added that it intends to pay a total dividend for 1996 of 9.6p, a reduction of 35 per cent. Underlying profits before interest for the six months to June 30 increased 3 per cent to £703 million, while continuing sales increased 13 per cent to £4.5 billion. Operating profits rose in most of the company's continuing divisions with the strongest performance in process control, where they increased 12 per cent to £86 million. But profits in the automotive division slipped 22 per cent to £68 million. Gross capital expenditure increased to £352 million, representing 7 per cent of sales, compared with 6 per cent in 1995. Gearing stood at 115 per cent on June 30. The purchase of Hawker Siddeley Electrical Power Group is the second major acquisition by FK1 in the past few weeks. FK1 said the BTR subsidiary would strengthen its engineering division. Jeff Whalley, chief executive of FK1, said the deal would be earnings enhancing and the company expected to make some cost savings. FK1 is paying cash for the company, which made profits of £20 million last year, increasing its gearing to about 70 per cent. FK1 shares rose 1p to 205p.

Pennington, page 25



BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDEXES		
FT-SE 100	2652.6	(+27.0)
Yield	3.57%	
FT-SE All share	1941.90	(+11.08)
Nikkei	20443.93	(-127.11)
New York		
Dow Jones	8789.69	(+34.77)
S&P Composite	671.50	(+4.22)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	8.75%	(5.75%)
Long Bond	9.07%	(9.51%)
Yield	7.07%	(7.11%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	8.75%	(8.75%)
Life long gilt	10.00%	(10.00%)
Future (Dec)	10.00%	(10.00%)
STERLING		
New York	1.5837	(1.5851)
London	1.5833	(1.5847)
DM	2.3518	(2.3478)
FF	1.9246	(1.9114)
Sfr	1.9224	(1.9174)
Yen	171.08	(171.41)
E index	86.5	(86.1)
\$\$\$ \$: DOLLAR		
London	1.5147	(1.5118)
DM	5.1688	(5.1670)
FF	3.2388	(3.2357)
Yen	110.27	(110.36)
S index	97.3	(97.2)
Tokyo close Yen 110.04		
NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Nov)	92.95	(92.95)
GOLD		
London close	\$382.55	(\$383.85)

* denotes midday trading price

Fierce rivalry hits profits at British Gas

By ERIC REGULY

BRITISH Gas incurred losses of £180 million in its industrial and commercial gas supply business in the first half of the year as it confronted cut-throat competition from rival suppliers. But the company said it is making progress in renegotiating the take-or-pay contracts, which oblige it to pay above-market prices for North Sea gas. Losses in the industrial and commercial gas supply business were £50 million in the first half of the previous year. The losses in the industrial and commercial gas division pushed down British Gas's after-tax profit, on a historic cost basis, by £70 million to £565 million in the interim period ending on June 30.

Earnings per share were 12.9p against 14.6p. Increased demand triggered by cold weather boosted turnover by 7 per cent to £5.1 billion. The interim dividend is maintained at 6.4p a share. Richard Giordano, chairman, said there were signs that a small number of gas suppliers were willing to renegotiate the take-or-pay contracts. Since its market share is shrinking, British Gas no longer requires all of the £40 billion of gas it agreed to buy from North Sea suppliers in the mid-1980s, when it still had a monopoly. Mr Giordano said: "There is a realistic assessment of the problem... We're struggling to make progress with two or three people. I hope they'll be

done quickly because they might show the way to others." British Gas has already paid £500 million to meet its take-or-pay obligations and analysts have estimated that it faces another £1 billion to £1.5 billion in contract liabilities. But this year's bill could drop to zero because of the cold weather, Mr Giordano said. Take-or-pay obligations and restructuring costs caused a near-doubling, to £3 billion, in British Gas's net borrowings, raising gearing from 16.6 per cent to 27.9 per cent. More than 5,500 employees left the company in the half-year period. This reduced the number of workers to about 43,000. British Gas appears to be making less progress with Clare Spottiswood, the Director-General of Ofgas, the industry regulator. The company said: "We are making a final attempt with Ofgas to achieve a workable solution which balances adequately the interests of our stakeholders." Ofgas has proposed reducing prices to customers by forcing British Gas to charge its rivals less for the use of its TransCo pipeline network, starting next year. The proposals, British Gas said, would reduce the TransCo's annual revenue by £650 million. Mr Giordano gave no details about the talks. Ofgas has given the company until October 7 to accept or reject the package. If it rejects it, the matter will be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Nigel Hawkins, an analyst at Yamaichi, said: "The odds are in favour of an MMC inquiry. There is no indication that Ofgas is prepared to make a U-turn." British Gas said that dividend policy depends on the outcome of TransCo's price review. Analysts have predicted that the annual payments could fall by 30 per cent, to 10p, unless Ofgas's price-cutting plan is relaxed. British Gas shares closed at 199.5p, up 3p.

John Lewis soars to interim record

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE John Lewis Partnership yesterday revealed record half-time profits and said it had set its sights on a record full year. Sales at both its department stores and at its Waitrose supermarkets were strong, providing further evidence of an upturn in consumer confidence. The company is setting aside £50.5 million of the £78.1 million pre-tax profit made in the six months to July 27 for investment in the business and profit-sharing. Profits were 72 per cent ahead of last year's £45.5 million. John Lewis staff last year received an average of eight weeks' pay as a bonus — when just £3.5 million was set aside in the first half — and so could be heading for a bumper payout this year. A spokesman would not be drawn on the expected level of bonuses, however. He said it would depend on second-half profits and the amount spent on expansion. John Lewis is expecting to open at

least three new stores in the next three years. It has also spent more than it expected on stockpiling and customer services. Department store sales were up 15 per cent and Waitrose up 14 per cent. Both were up 10 per cent like for like. According to Stuart Hampson, chairman: "We have to go back ten years to find a time when both divisions together scored such good, real-term, sales increases." He said that with profit growth far outstripping sales growth, both divisions were clearly capturing market share. He said there had been a "confident start" to the second half. Tony Shiret, retail analyst at BZW, said John Lewis was a stronger performer than most comparable retailers, but he added: "It is clearly supportive of the view that the retail back-ground is strong."

Pennington, page 25



Christopher Norland, chairman of Frank Usher, with model Miranda reported £2.02 million profits for the fashion house

PIA proposes changes to investor protection rules

AS CONCERN grows about safeguards for investors in the wake of Morgan Grenfell, the Personal Investment Authority (PIA) is proposing changes that would streamline and simplify investor protection procedures (Anne Ashworth writes).

"Best advice" for the client, the concept that encapsulates much of the current regime may be under threat. A range including "not unsuitable" and "most suitable" advice is suggested as a replacement. Colete Bowe, PIA chief executive, said: "We are talking about finding some way in which complex transactions can be made easier by simplifying the procedures. We are not taking away from investor protection, we are adding to it."

Pennington, page 25

Shares rise to record high as inflation dips

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S headline inflation rate fell back in August to 2.1 per cent, but the underlying inflation rate, targeted by the Government, remained stuck at 2.8 per cent for the fourth month running, in spite of City expectations of a fall. The stubbornness of underlying inflation, which the Government wants at 2.5 per cent or less, convinced many in the City that base rates should not fall again. However, in spite of mild disappointment, the stock market still soared to a new record on the back of positive British corporate results and a strong performance on Wall Street. American shares rose after a benign report on US producer prices, while, in London, the FT-SE 100 index closed 27 points up, at a record 3,932.6. Headline inflation had slipped up disappointingly in July to 2.2 per cent, and August's fall brought it back to June's 2.1 per cent. The fall in the annual rate in August was largely because seasonal food prices did not rise by nearly as much as last year, when drought pushed up grocery prices. The underlying rate, which

City analysts had hoped would fall back in August, was kept at 2.8 per cent partly because of increased motoring costs. Second-hand car prices were up unexpectedly and petrol prices were up by around 2 per cent, suggesting that the fierce price competition, particularly between supermarkets, may have eased off. The rise in petrol prices may also partly reflect a 10 per cent surge in crude oil prices over the July to August period. The Office for National Statistics said that it is possible that a further rise in crude oil prices related to renewed uncertainty over Iraq may push petrol prices up again in September, although the relationship between crude and petrol prices is not always close. Broadly, however, the City remains confident that underlying inflation is set to fall over the coming months. In September, another outbreak of supermarket price competition, some more cuts in mortgage rates, feeding through as last year, when drought pushed up grocery prices, should help to keep the lid on inflation.

Chelsea £20m transfer is lost

By JASON NISSE

EVEN if you have a £120 million personal fortune and can afford a £1 million personal donation to the Labour Party, it is hard to misplace share certificates worth nearly £20 million. But that is what Matthew Harding, the insurance tycoon, has done. Certificates for the bulk of his 25 per cent stake in Chelsea Village, owner of the football club, have been lost in the post. Last week Mr Harding sent two certificates, one for 143 million shares, the other for 5.6 million, to Chelsea's registrars, a subsidiary of stockbroker Neill Clerk in Glasgow. Apparently he wanted the registered holder changed to a nominee company. The trouble is the certificates did not arrive. Ross McDonaid, chief executive of Neill Clerk, said: "We never got them. They did not arrive through our door and we certainly have not lost them."

According to Robert Ellis, chairman of Ellis & Partners, Chelsea's financial advisors, the certificates are believed to have been lost in the post. He said: "I think there has been some problem to do with the mail strike." The Stock Exchange has sent a note to City stockbrokers, warning them that if anyone tries to sell the shares, the Exchange should be contacted. Neill Clerk says it will replace the certificates free if Mr Harding signs a form indemnifying the broker against any losses. Mr Harding and George Soros, the US speculator, were claiming victory last night in their hostile bid for HCG Lloyd's Investment Trust. Their investment vehicle, Benfield & Rea Investment Trust, claimed to have received valid acceptances in respect of 56.4 per cent of HCG's shares.

Lloyds TSB to shut 150 branches

By GEORGE SIVELL

LOYD'S TSB plans to close about 150 of the 3,000 branch network created by the merger completed in December, but said yesterday that it had not identified those that would be shut. The plans were described as a routine part of restructuring to adapt to changing markets. The bank also said it had shed about 600 jobs through natural wastage since the merger took effect. Lloyds TSB now employs 85,000 full-time staff. The planned branch closures were immediately condemned by Bifu, the banking union, which said it believed that more than 1,000 branches would close and that up to 10,000 jobs were at risk. Lloyds TSB, however, said that speculation of 1,000 closures was unfounded, adding: "The branch network is very important to us. We will not see the number falling greatly below 3,000. A great deal of business comes to us through those branches." The bank said it believed the planned closures were in line with the banking industry generally, but added that it was investing in other areas such as phone and remote banking to improve customer service. No figure has been put on the redundancies resulting from the closures. John Townsend, assistant secretary of Bifu, said: "Six hundred job losses linked to the merger have already been announced in head office departments in Birmingham and Bristol and in clearing departments in London."

Words have wings and that's the truth (thanks to seat-back phones in our planes to Florence).

TELECOM ITALIA

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United News & Media 21% up in first half

BY FRANK LE DUC

TRONG growth in broadcasting, trade magazines and exhibitions was highlighted as United News & Media announced pre-tax profits of £152 million in the six months to June 30.

The figures are the first since the merger with AAL, which was announced in February and completed in April. The pre-tax profits show an increase of 21.5 per cent on the £125 million of the first half of 1995.

The results slightly exceeded forecasts, but

analysts said that exceptional charges, at £32.3 million, were also higher than expected.

Lord Hollick, chief executive, said that United would take £32 million of restructuring costs in the second half as it turns the *Daily Express* and the *Sunday Express* into a seven-day operation. The £32 million proceeds from selling Tolley, the legal publisher, will also be accounted for in the second half.

Lord Hollick said that current trading was in line with expectations, advertising growth was steady and newspaper prices were softening. He

expects further strong demand in the exhibitions and trade magazines businesses.

Operating profits of the broadcasting and entertainment division advanced by 75 per cent, to £26.3 million, on the back of a strong performance by Anglia and Meridian.

Consumer publishing, which includes national and provincial newspapers and advertising magazines such as *Dalton's Weekly* and *Exchange & Mart*, contributed operating profits of £41.6 million (£43.1 million).

Financial services — including Harlow

Butler and Garban, the money and securities broking businesses — made £31.5 million (£30.2 million).

Business services — trade magazines and exhibitions — lifted its contribution from £36.3 million to £51.2 million.

Lord Hollick said: "We have done what we said we would do at the time of the merger, which was to improve performance and develop our core businesses. I'm sorry if that's boring."

Earnings per share were 21.1p (16.9p). An 8p dividend, up 3 per cent, is due on December 2.

Bae chief sees more defence mergers

BY OLIVER AUGUST

THE consolidation of the European defence industry will be largely completed soon after the turn of the century, Sir Richard Evans, chief executive of British Aerospace, forecast yesterday.

He said that within five years defence companies in Britain, France and Germany will have merged most of their businesses to be able to compete more effectively with their American rivals.

Sir Richard said that aircraft, helicopter and weapons companies will merge their assets but also establish national subsidiaries to maintain national identities. This will create large research and development savings while the subsidiaries maintain links with national governments and their defence budgets.

He said efficiency savings were unlikely to result in significant job losses because the new pan-European companies would enjoy an increase in global sales. BAE's workforce is projected to remain steady at about 43,000 over the next five years.

Yesterday BAE reported a 75 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £199 million from £114 million in the six months to June 30. Earnings increased to 31.2p a share from 12.2p. The interim dividend was lifted by 1.25p to 6.25p. BAE shares rose 37p to £10.49.

Sir Richard said: "The measures taken and continuing to improve productivity are drive-

ing the strong performance now becoming evident from these results and will ensure that maximum value is derived from delivering the substantial forward order book."

"With the business now starting to deliver this performance, we are better able to influence the future shape of our industry. We believe we now share common objectives of European consolidation with others in the industry, but recognise the challenges facing potential partners."

"Such consolidation will take time and we will continue to seek performance growth through further order capture and cost elimination."

A significant step in the European consolidation programme was taken last month when BAE's missile business and the French missile builder Matra formed a new joint company.

BAE nevertheless insists that strict criteria have to be met before further consolidations can be agreed, and that political factors will be taken into account. Since the deal with Matra, BAE has been particularly keen to set up a similar arrangement with a German company.

Sir Richard again dismissed suggestions that BAE may be in merger talks with GEC. He said there would be no talks in the next 12 months and that a merger was "highly unlikely" and "not a priority".

Tempos, page 26



Sir Richard Evans, left, and Richard Laphorne, finance director, said profits rose

Legal & General UK sales soar 56%

BY KEITH RODGERS

LEGAL & GENERAL saw interim UK sales of investment, protection and pension products leap 56.4 per cent to a six-year high as its competitive pricing policy paid off.

The group also announced yesterday that it is opening a telephone sales centre in Cardiff on Monday, initially to sell healthcare and term assurance. It hopes the operation will eventually house up to 400 staff and account for about a quarter of its business.

David Frosser, chief executive, added that the company was in preliminary discussions with the Bank of England as it looks to extend its range into banking-based deposit account products, although he ruled out expanding into current accounts and full banking services.

Operating profits before tax climbed from £111.1 million to £134.3 million, while earnings per share rose from 17.1p to 18.02p. The pre-tax profit figure was distorted by a reclassification of £1.4 billion of shareholders' retained capital.

The interim dividend, payable on 2 December, climbed 13.6 per cent to 8.75p, and analysts were confident that dividend growth will continue.

The company said it had increased its share of the life and pensions market, with new equivalent premium income climbing from £90.5 million to £141.5 million. Personal equity plans sales increased fivefold. Underlying UK life and pensions profits grew 14 per cent.

The company sold its commercial insurance lines to Guardian Insurance in July, which will create an exceptional profit of £70 million — £50 million after tax — in the full-year. The company is proposing a five for two split of ordinary shares to improve liquidity.

Woodchester eyes Swedish market

FROM EILEEN MCCABE IN DUBLIN

WOODCHESTER Investments, the finance company in which France's Credit Lyonnais has a controlling interest, plans to enter the Swedish market, hoping to match its recent success in Portugal and Denmark.

The company, which is based in the Irish Republic, yesterday reported a 25 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £121.4 million for the six months to the end of June.

Earnings rose 19 per cent to £17.41p a share and the interim dividend is increased 15 per cent to £13.16p, payable on November 8. The company

said that new business rose 46 per cent to £160 million in the first half.

Craig McKinney, chairman, yesterday sought to reassure investors, saying the continuing financial problems of Credit Lyonnais had no impact on Woodchester.

There has been persistent speculation that the French bank will be forced to divest its 53 per cent stake in the company. Mr McKinney said: "It's not inhibiting our growth in any way. We know that if Credit Lyonnais decides to divest, there are no shortage of potential buyers."

Woodchester's UK operations were boosted by a good performance from Anglo Group.

Warning as weak prices hit Minorco

MINORCO, the minerals and industrial materials company, suffered a 5 per cent fall in net earnings in the first half to June 30, affected by weaker industrial commodity prices.

The company said a weaker copper price would have an adverse second-half impact, although hedging programmes will provide some protection. The company, based in Luxembourg and controlled by South African interests, saw net earnings before exceptional items fall to \$200 million from \$210 million. The interim dividend is maintained at 21 cents.

Net gains of \$117 million from investment disposals increased net earnings to \$317 million. Operating earnings fell 11 per cent to \$342 million.

Irish rate rise fears recede on inflation data

FROM EILEEN MCCABE IN DUBLIN

THE threat of an official interest rate increase in the Irish Republic receded yesterday with the release of government figures showing a modest increase in the annual inflation rate to 1.5 per cent in the year to the end of August.

This compared with 1.4 per cent for the year to the end of mid-May and was better than expected by economists in Dublin.

The Central Bank of Ireland gave further solace to anxious borrowers by forecasting a full 1996 inflation rate of 1.75 per cent. However, the bank cautioned that a steady rise in private sector credit, particularly domestic mortgages, could pose an inflationary threat to the Irish economy in the medium term.

In its autumn bulletin, the bank said: "The Irish economy has been growing above bank estimates of its long-run potential rate for a number of years and the longer this situation persists the greater the threat to price stability."

Last month the Central Bank acted on its concern about credit growth by refusing to intervene to stem the steady rise of the key, inter-bank one-month rate from 5.5 per cent to 5.75 per cent. As a result, most lending institutions increased their rates by between 0.25 and 0.5 of a percentage point.

The Central Bank reiterated its commitment to a policy of price stability and continued adherence to the Maastricht treaty criteria for economic and monetary union. The bank said that after two years of very strong growth, Ireland's GNP is likely to be about 5 per cent for both 1996 and 1997.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Sorrell collects £2.7m of shares under deal

MARTIN SORRELL, chief executive of WPP Group, the advertising and marketing company, was yesterday awarded shares worth £2.7 million under a controversial package set up last year. He collected 1,172,845 shares, the first of four tranches to which he will be entitled if WPP fulfils performance targets on share price, total shareholder return and earnings per share growth. The target for the first set required that WPP's shares trade at a minimum of 198p for 60 consecutive trading days.

The remaining three sets of 1,172,845 shares each are subject to share price targets of 230p, 260p and 304p. The four-tiered share package was tied to Mr Sorrell's investment last year of £2 million of his own money in WPP shares. He then acquired 1,129,305 shares at 115p each. The total five-year package has been calculated to be worth up to £28.5 million. In addition to the shares, it includes a salary of £750,000 and up to an equal amount in cash bonuses.

Caradon disposals

CARADON, the building supplies group, expects to complete the sale of most of its European engineering and distribution businesses for about £215 million by the end of this year. Purchaser for 15 of the 17 businesses is believed to be CINVEN, the former British Coal venture capital company bought out by its management. Buyer of the other two is believed to be Magna, of the US. Caradon's pre-tax profits fell to £81.3 million (£90.2 million) in the six months to June 30, but it made cost savings of £30 million. The interim dividend stays at 2.9p.

Shell Transport ahead

SHELL Transport and Trading, the UK arm of the Royal Dutch/Shell group, yesterday declared an interim dividend of 14.4p a share, up 11.6 per cent on the 1995 interim of 12.9p. Royal Dutch Petroleum, the group's Dutch arm, declared an interim dividend of 4.30 guilders (3.90 pence). Analysts said that the market range of expectations for the dividends was between 14p and 15.5p for Shell and 4 guilders to 4.50 guilders for Royal Dutch. Shell shares will go ex-dividend on September 23. The dividend is due to be paid on November 4.

Gillette-Duracell deal

GILLETTE, the consumer products company, is to buy Duracell International Inc for about \$7 billion. Duracell's copper-top batteries appear on many of the same store shelves as Gillette's Sensor and Good News shaving products, Right Guard deodorant Oral-B toothbrushes and Paper Mate pens. The deal completes the divestiture of Duracell by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, the buyout firm, which purchased Duracell from Kraft for \$1.8 billion in 1988. It had retained a 34 per cent stake.

Memory chief resigns

FOUNDER Alex Deas has resigned as chairman of Memory Corporation, the microchip company, to become chief scientist. The company reports interim losses of £3.06 million — a £2.31 million increase. The group repairs imperfect microchips and has not recovered from last November's market collapse, when perfect chips plunged from \$400 to \$70. Memory sells repaired chips for approximately \$50. It wrote off £1.1 million of stock from unsold 8-megabyte chips. Group sales were £87,000 (£450,000). Bill Hipp will be new chairman.

TLS on takeover road

TLS, the vehicle rental company, is acquiring Commercial Recovery & Repairs (CRR) for a maximum consideration of £6.8 million. CRR is involved in the rental of heavy goods vehicles, light commercial vehicles and trailers. TLS also announced an increase of 32 per cent in pre-tax profits to £2.4 million for the half-year to the end of June. Earnings were 4p a share, compared with 3.8p in the corresponding period. The interim dividend is lifted to 1.1p a share from 0.85p.

Setback for APV

PRE-TAX profits at APV, the food equipment maker, fell to £700,000, from £7.1 million, in the half-year to June 30, reflecting weak markets and a lower order book at the start of the year. Earnings dropped to 0.2p a share from 1.6p, while the dividend is held at 1p a share, payable on January 3. The results include £8 million of restructuring costs. Sir Peter Cazalet, chairman, said there were signs that order intake was picking up and the company expected to show progress in the second half over the comparable period in 1995.

Coopers fees record

COOPERS & LYBRAND, the accountancy partnership, raised gross fee income by 6 per cent to a record £701 million in the year to end-April. Coopers should remain comfortably top of the league of UK accountants. Corporate finance was the best performer, with 12 per cent growth to £72 million. It claims the most lead deals of any adviser at 149. Audit and accountancy, now grouped with due diligence and similar work in a business assurance division, increased gross income by 7 per cent to £239 million.

Logica wins contract

LOGICA, the information technology consultancy, has won a £4.25 million contract to supply the electricity pool of England and Wales with a computer system to run a deregulated electricity market. The computer framework will connect domestic customers to the supplier of their choice and co-ordinate trading between generators and distributors. Yesterday Logica reported pre-tax profits up 22 per cent at £24.7 million for the year to June 30. Earnings were 27.1p (21.7p) a share. A final dividend of 4.8p, due on November 14, gives a total of 7.8p (6.24p).

FOUR RATES

	Bank	Bank
	Buys	Sells
Australia \$	2.04	1.88
Austria Sch	2.75	14.00
Belgium Fr	51.20	47.00
Canada \$	2.240	2.000
Cyprus Cyp£	0.757	0.700
Denmark Kr	5.81	5.81
Finland Mk	7.88	7.51
France Fr	5.41	7.78
Germany DM	2.50	2.29
Greece Dr	3.58	3.18
Hong Kong \$	15.67	11.87
Ireland £	1.15	80
Italy Lit	1.25	4.98
Israel Sh	5.71	4.98
Japan Yen	185.20	182.50
Netherlands Gld	0.901	0.546
Norway Kr	8.781	2.551
Portugal Esc	2.38	3.18
Spain Ptas	166.37	166.37
Sweden Kr	361.50	191.50
Switzerland Fr	11.54	10.34
Turkey Lira	5.25	1.57
USA \$	140.700	132.700

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates are at close of trading yesterday.



The "Shell" Transport and Trading Company, Public Limited Company

Interim dividend 1996

Notice is hereby given that a balance of the Register will be struck on Tuesday, 1st October, 1996 for the preparation of warrants for an Interim dividend for the year 1996 of 14.4p per 25p Ordinary share payable on 4th November, 1996.

For transferees to receive this dividend, their transfers must be lodged with the Company's Registrar—Lloyds Bank Registrars, The Causeway, Worthing, West Sussex BN99 6DA, not later than 3pm on 1st October, 1996.

SHARE WARRANTS TO BEARER

The Coupon to be presented for the above dividend will be No. 196 which must be deposited at Lloyds Bank Plc, Registrar's Department, Receiving Bank Services, Ground Floor, P.O. Box 1000, Anthon House, 71 Queen Street, London EC4N 1SL (not later than 1st October, 1996, to receive payment on 4th November, 1996) or may be surrendered through Messieurs Lazard Frères et C^{ie}, 121 boulevard Haussmann, 75382 Paris Cedex 08.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Miss J.E. Muniff
Secretary

Shell Centre,
London SE1 7NA
12th September, 1996

The Secretary of State hereby gives notice that he intends to grant on 16 September 1996 a licence in the following terms.

INTERIM OPEN GENERAL LICENCE CHEMICAL WEAPONS ACT 1996

This Licence is granted by the Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 20 of the Chemical Weapons Act 1996 (c.6).

1 Interpretation

Terms and expressions used in this Licence shall bear the same meanings as they have in the Chemical Weapons Act 1996.

2 Authorisation

This Licence authorises any person to:

- use any Schedule 1 toxic chemical or precursor for a permitted purpose; and
- to produce or have in his possession any Schedule 1 toxic chemical or precursor with the intention that it will be used for a permitted purpose.

3 Period of Licence

The Licence shall come into force on 16th September 1996 and shall expire at midnight on 31st December 1996.

The definitive licensing regime under s.20 of the Chemical Weapons Act 1996 will be introduced from 1 January 1997 and will take two forms: an Open General Licence, with reporting requirements, for production, possession and use of up to 5 grammes of Schedule 1 chemicals for research, medical or pharmaceutical purposes, and individual licences covering quantities over 5 grammes. Further details of these arrangements will be available in due course.

For further information please contact John Biddler at the Department of Trade & Industry on 0171 215 8222.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

COMPANY NOTICES

CANADIAN PACIFIC LIMITED

As a meeting of the Board of Directors held today, the following dividend was declared:

COMMON SHARES

A quarterly dividend of twelve cents (12¢) Canadian dollars per share in the ordinary course of business payable October 25, 1996 to shareholders of record as of the close of business September 27, 1996.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD
D.J. Duggan
Vice-President and Secretary
Calgary, September 9, 1996

SPANISH 4% EXTERNAL LOAN (1974 issues)

The coupon due on 1st October 1996 may be presented for payment at Banco Exterior de España S.A., 14 Great Tower Street, London EC4A 3DF, between the hours of 10am and 4pm on 12th September 1996.

PUBLIC NOTICES

CHARITY COMMISSION

Charity "The Victorian Order of the Polar Regions" (No. 21570) has made a request to the Charity Commission for a licence to sell its assets for the purpose of raising funds for the charity.

LEGAL NOTICES

ADAMSON & SON LIMITED
NOTICE OF RESOLUTION FOR PAYMENT OF CAPITAL
ADAMSON & SON LIMITED, a company registered in Scotland, has resolved to pay a dividend of 10p per share on its ordinary shares of 10p each.

LEGAL NOTICES

WED A TREE LIMITED

WED A TREE LIMITED, a company registered in England, has resolved to pay a dividend of 10p per share on its ordinary shares of 10p each.

LEGAL PUBLIC COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

0171-782 7344 OR FAX: 0171-782 7827
Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 2.30pm. Two days notice to attention.

□ A matter of trust at BTR □ Does Matthew Clark have more drink problems? □ PIA wrong on timing and content

U-turn after perpetual motion

WHAT an exciting life it was running BTR in its glory days. All that jangling around as one of the world's most active corporate raiders, striking fear in the hearts of lacklustre management everywhere. And what a dull time there is to be had managing its inevitable decline.

BTR was a perpetual-motion machine whose motion eventually had to stop. What was surprising was how quickly the whole thing ground to a halt. The start of the end can be dated with remarkable precision, to September 8 1994, that terrible day when Alan Jackson, the then chief executive, was forced to admit to the City that margins were slipping. In most companies, this would be the occasion for mild recrimination and a determination to pull one's socks up. For BTR, it was like reversing the law of gravity.

Mr Jackson blamed a problem at Denver airport, of all places, but more searching analysis showed that large chunks of the group had their woes. He and Sir Owen Green, the man mainly responsible for BTR in its current form, are now gone, and to Ian Strachan falls the lugubrious task of reversing much of their strategy.

Mr Strachan has sold, or will

sell, a string of companies representing a quarter of BTR's turnover. Some 37 are still to go, with average annual turnover of £24 million apiece. The aim is to refine the group so that those businesses still within BTR earn their keep. Mr Strachan points out that the retained bits, on an historic basis, would earn a 16 per cent return on capital, handsomely indeed. Those bits sold, by contrast, earn little more than 10 per cent, and those still to go earn a lowly 7.6 per cent.

At the same time, BTR will be slimmed from 32 product groups to seven business groupings — the jargon may elude some readers, but it is dear to Mr Strachan's heart, so please persevere — all of which will control a significant or leading share of their markets. This is the key; if you are not a market leader, you have no reason to be there.

Mr Strachan puts down BTR's dismal share price performance over the past year or more to fashion and market perception. Ho hum. The fashion is against

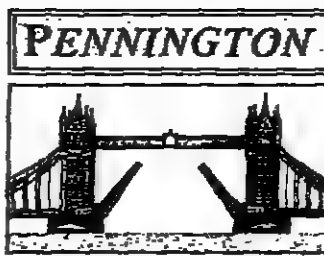
conglomerates, but the perception that BTR had run out of steam was, with the benefit of hindsight, clearly correct. The key question is whether the bits being sold are the right ones, or whether the management is merely responding to short-term cyclical trends and getting rid of those businesses that happen to be doing badly this year.

Mr Strachan has mustered a bewildering array of statistics to "prove" that the bits being kept are outperforming the rest, but, at the end of the day, such sweeping reorganisations are a matter of trust. The City, quite rightly, seems inclined to trust him.

A tale of two cider makers

THE most exacting research has shown that the average teenage drinker cannot tell one new brand of cider from another. They order by brand, and brands are boosted only by advertising.

On Tuesday, Matthew Clark,



which owns half the British cider industry, shocked the drinks sector by revealing that the ever more popular "alcopops" — those ghastly concoctions of fruit juices and alcohol sold under names such as Thickhead that imply that taste is not the main criterion for purchase — had taken a big chunk out of July and August sales. Clark's shares plunged, yet the story never really rang true. Alcopops are hardly new. Analysts wondered whether rather more was amiss.

Yesterday, they had their answer. The rival HP Bulmer said that the market was still fine, and the premium packaged end,

the more expensive bottled brands, was 8 per cent up, year on year. This was just the area that Matthew Clark had claimed was worst hit by alcopops. Bulmer's shares rose in relief, and Matthew Clark fell further.

Peter Aikens, the latter's chief executive, was already unpopular in the City over the small matter of the £43,000 that he was paid to cover the cost of moving house. His popularity will not have been enhanced by this week's disaster, and he had better have a stiff exercise book tucked down the back of his trousers when he does the inevitable round of meetings the institutions are demanding.

Matthew Clark has risen fast from humble origins because the trust that the City has put in the management has allowed rapid expansion through share issues. One institution was buying this week, obviously reckoning the worst is past. The company has various options, emphasising some brands at the expense of others or jacking up advertising.

But if there are more problems, Mr Aikens would be advised to come clean now. These things tend to come out in the end.

Investor protection demands disclosure

PUBLISHING a discussion paper on investor protection today with no reference to the Morgan Grenfell scandal is a little like putting out a report on maritime safety in May 1912 without mentioning the Titanic. Surely, the Personal Investment Authority could have delayed publication for a few weeks so as to include some reference, however sketchy, to the biggest scandal to hit personal investment in years?

This is more than a cavil about timing, though. The view that most clearly emerges from the PIA is that investors are being given too much information, so they are unable to make sensible decisions. This extends and complicates the sales process, and might put a few people off.

This column has long argued that too many of the documents that thump on to investors' door-

steps are disgracefully jargon-ridden and uninformative. This is not a question of omitting information, however, but of refining it. There must be some suspicion that the PIA has had its ear bent by some big players unhappy with the volume of paperwork they have to sift.

With Morgan Grenfell, management and, therefore, investors were deliberately kept in the dark. Little can be done by the regulator if rogue individuals decide to mislead their employers. But limiting what employers must tell the customer can hardly help.

Partners on a roll

SEARS has its shoelaces in a twist. House of Fraser is in rehab and Sainsbury is swimming in own-label porridge. Meanwhile, politically unfashionable John Lewis is charging ahead. Partners were paid eight weeks' money in profit share, department stores and Waitrose are both gaining market share and half-year profit surged. There is much to be said for stability, job security and avoiding the City.

Earnings slump shrugged off at RTZ-CRA

By CARL MORTIMER

RTZ-CRA, the Anglo-Australian mining group, yesterday shrugged off a 22 per cent slump in earnings caused by the collapse in the copper price and confidently predicted buoyant demand for metals.

Falling base metal prices and the Sumitomo copper scandal wiped \$194 million off first-half earnings to June 30. RTZ-CRA's first half was also depressed by technical delays in bringing a new smelter on stream, while labour trouble affected CRA's Australian coal operations. Adjusted earnings fell from \$711 million to \$552 million (£361 million). Adverse exchange rates took off \$34 million.

Robert Wilson, chief executive, said: "Confidence was clearly shaken by the Sumitomo crisis." But he said the group was confident about growth of demand. "The prices of metals are more

depressed than the fundamentals of supply and demand and stocks would suggest."

RTZ was badly hit by the copper price which fell to an average 115 cents a pound from 132 cents in the first half of last year. The price has since slumped to 90 cents, causing a 46 per cent fall in combined copper and gold earnings to \$190 million, despite a 17 per cent rise in copper production to 363,000 tonnes.

Profits from copper were further affected by a fall in refined copper production because of delays in building up production at Kennecott's new smelter in the US. The company said that had the smelter been operating at full capacity, metal earnings would have been up by \$100 million.

The company said that the review of the exploration port-

folio of the combined RTZ-CRA group had been completed. Eliminating duplication and marginal programmes will save \$50 million per year.

RTZ hopes to raise production levels at its Grasberg copper mine to about 200,000 tonnes a day. Engineering work is almost complete and construction work 36 per cent complete at the Lihir gold mine in Papua New Guinea.

RTZ has ceased work at the Century Zinc project in Australia while the company negotiates with aboriginal claimants under the right-to-negotiate procedures of the Native Title Act.

RTZ is paying a 10.6p interim, up from 10.5p on earnings of 25.8p (32p). The company expects the interim to represent about one third of the final payout.

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Hamish Bryce said that the group held its market share

TLG shares plummet after profit warning

By FRASER NELSON

SHARES of TLG plunged from 170½p to 92½p yesterday after the light fittings manufacturer said trading conditions in Europe had worsened and predicted its interim profits would be significantly behind last year's. The shares recovered slightly to close at 108½p.

Hamish Bryce, its chairman, said that while TLG had retained its market share, markets had deteriorated across Europe. However, he

added that the group expected to recover its lost sales in its second half.

The French lighting market was the worst hit, he said, falling 8 per cent compared with last year. The Swedish market fell 7 per cent, the UK market 5 per cent and the German market 4 per cent.

The group said its interim profits would be between £8 million and £8.5 million against the £11.4 million achieved last time.

Laing sees housing improve

John Laing, the building group, said there have been improvements in the housing market in the South East and signs of recovery in the construction sector.

Laing's pre-tax profits fell to £8.8 million, from £9.7 million, in the half year to June 30. The dividend is held at 3p.

The company is optimistic about prospects. Turnover rose to £574 million (£553.2 million). Net cash has risen to £63.5 million (£25.4 million a year ago), and recent contracts should ensure steady work.

Headlam up

Headlam Group, the floorcoverings and fashion distribution group, said UK customers were reporting a sustainable rise in demand by consumers. Interim pre-tax profits were £4.4 million, up from £3.1 million. The dividend is 1.45p (1.2p).

Lambert ahead

Lambert Howarth, the footwear and homeware group, is holding its interim dividend at 2.25p. Pre-tax profits were £790,000 in the half year to June, up from £630,000.

Hall higher

Hall Engineering, the wire and automotive products manufacturer, lifted pre-tax profits to £5.3 million (£3.4 million) in the half to June 30, aided by a £1.33 million profit on a disposal. The interim dividend is 3.775p (same).

Enterprise forms US alliance

By CARL MORTIMER

ENTERPRISE Oil has agreed a strategic alliance with Pennzoil, the US energy group, that will give the UK company a stake in Pennzoil's extensive exploration prospects in the Gulf of Mexico. The agreement is Enterprise's first venture in the US

drilling new wells in return for a half share in each prospect.

The US venture came as Enterprise announced net profits of £73.8 million for the half year to June, an increase of 59 per cent on the first six months of 1995. Record oil and gas production of 204,802 barrels per day, up 2 per cent on last year, helped to raise profits as did an increase in

£10.83 in 1995 to £12.28 in the first six months of the year.

It is maintaining the interim dividend at 6.5p a share, payable from earnings that rose 65 per cent to 13.5p a share.

Graham Hearne, chairman, said the group was on track to replace reserves this year and increase production to 300,000 barrels per day by 1999.

STV zooms in on record

IMPROVED advertising income helped Scottish Television, the ITV company that recently bought Caledonian Publishing, to report record interim earnings yesterday (Eric Reguly writes).

STV said that advertising income in the half year to June 30 rose 7 per cent to £39.7 million, giving the company 4.79 per cent of net ITV advertising revenue, up from 4.69 per cent. Pre-tax profits rose 39 per cent to

£10.3 million, on turnover from continuing operations of £52.2 million, up 15 per cent. Earnings per share were 11.5p, up 12 per cent, and the interim dividend, to be paid on November 8, rises 38 per cent to 5.5p.

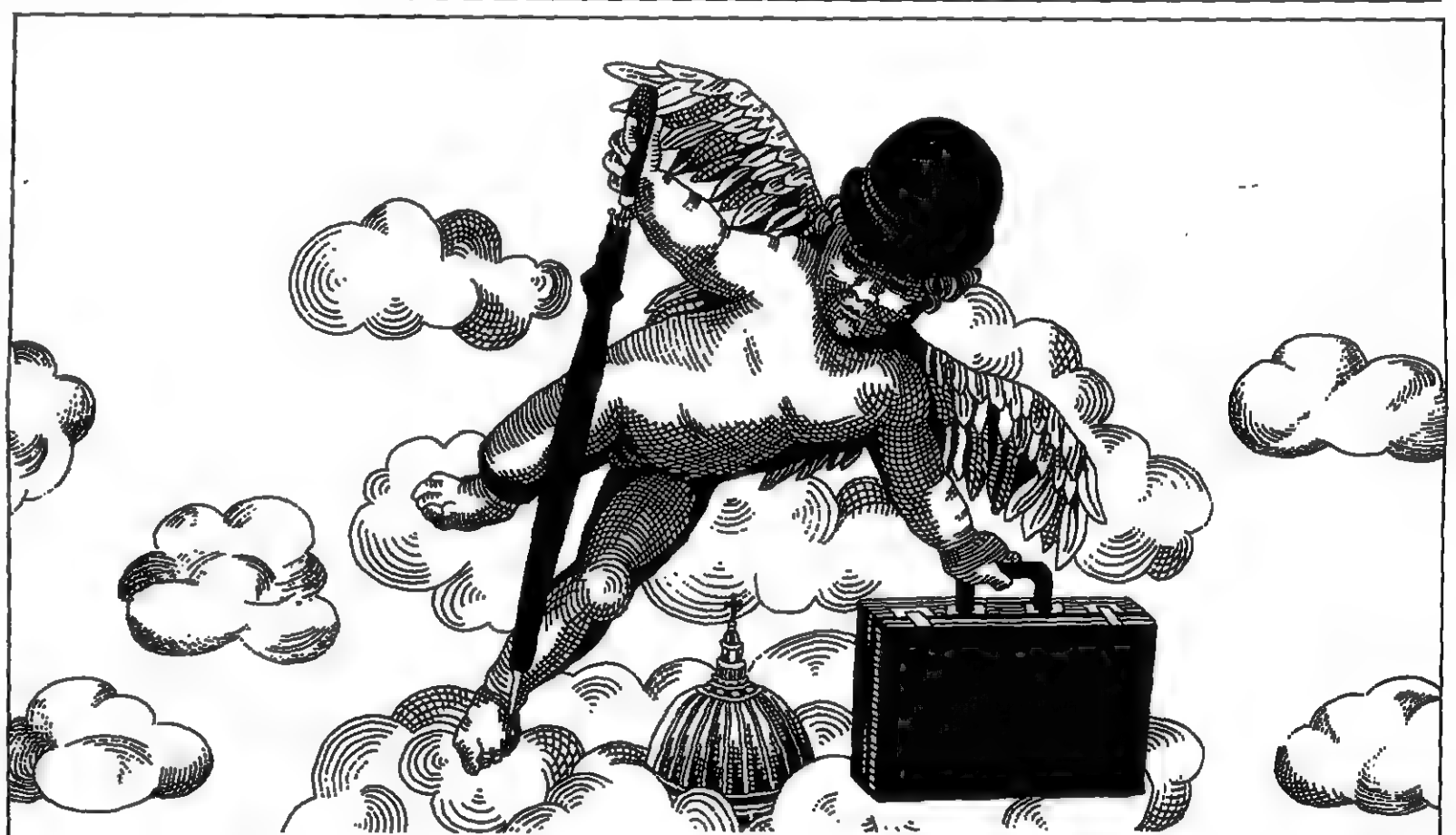
STV said that it has formed a joint venture with BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster that is an associate company of News International, owner of The Times, to start broadcasting the Sky Scottish satellite channel in November.

Recovery at United Biscuits

UNITED BISCUITS (Holdings) returned to profit in the first half to July 13 with a strong recovery in its UK biscuits and snacks businesses (Sarah Cunningham writes). Pre-tax profit after exceptional charges are £42.8 million, compared with a £37.8 million loss. Before exceptional charges, profits this time were £44.9 million (£22.9 million). UK profits, by far its largest market, were up 12 per cent, but in continental Europe were down 30 per cent and in

Asia Pacific down 61 per cent. Eric Nicoli, chief executive, said the UK crisps market was still highly competitive and remained a source of concern. Although profits were down on the first half of last year in continental Europe, they were well up on the second half of 1995. The company has no plans for acquisitions, he said. The interim is held at 3.5p.

Tempus, page 26



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tired and thirsty,
always going
to the loo, stopping
you from being
a City highflyer?

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STOCK MARKET



CLARE STEWART

Strong results help shares to record closing high

THE stock market recovered its head for heights yesterday as it leapt ahead to a record closing high.

The FT-SE 100 closed at 3,932.6, a rise of 27 points, and just a fraction below the peak reached during trading hours earlier in the week.

A raft of strong corporate results fuelled the market's optimism, helped by gains on Wall Street. The market shrugged off slightly worse than expected price rises in August that trimmed the annual rate of inflation to 2.1 per cent from 2.2 per cent in July.

With more buyers than sellers in the market, prices were squeezed higher across the board, adding 15 billion to share values by the close. Dealers expect to be busy again today, with the market now setting its sights on the 4,000 level.

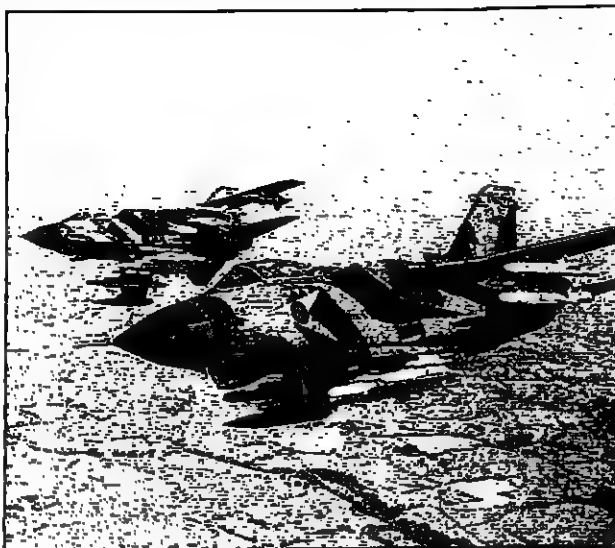
British Aerospace took off after announcing first-half profits of £215 million and a higher than forecast dividend of 6.25p. A solid performance from its defence division, a strong order book boosted by orders to supply Tornado combat aircraft to Saudi Arabia and a new Nimrod contract in the UK, together with signs of improvement in commercial operations prompted several analysts to upgrade figures for the full year to £415 million pre-tax. The shares soared 36p to 1050.5p.

Details of restructuring plans at BTR, the industrial group, were well received. Shares rose 9 1/2p to 275 1/2p as it announced pre-exceptional profits of £636 million (£706 million) and the £182 million sale of Hawker Siddeley Electric Powe to FKI, whose shares jumped 11p to 205p.

Shares in RTZ, the mining group, rose 31p to 961 1/2p. This came in spite of a dip in first-half profits and some caution in the market as to second-half prospects, given the falling price of copper.

Better than expected interim results and an encouraging outlook for the year cheered shares in Caradon, the building products group, 28 1/2p higher to 249 1/2p. The brighter outlook helped others in the sector, including Pilkington, which rose 6p to 200p. United Biscuits rose 10p to 212 1/2p as it reported half-year profits of £42.8 million in line with market forecasts.

Shares in United News & Media, publisher of the Daily Express, rose 6p to



Shares in BAE, supplier of Tornado aircraft, soared

71 1/2p after surprising the market with better than expected figures. In its first set of results since merging with MAI, United News lifted pre-tax profits before exceptional 31.5 per cent to £151.9 million. A healthy dividend increase and strong first-half figures boosted Legal & General. Its shares, which are to be split in a five-for-two division, rose

ally buoyant market. A warning that first-half profits would be hard hit by difficult conditions in Europe, sent its shares crashing 61p to 109 1/2p, a fall of 35 per cent. The fall took TLG below the issue price of 115p at which it floated in October 1994.

The oil sector was back in the spotlight once again. The price of crude oil moved ahead

Cheerier noises coming from the housing market helped to lift retailers. Carpetright rose 16p to 591 1/2p. Courts Furniture 32 1/2p to 917 1/2p, and Essex Furniture 6p to 94 1/2p. By contrast, the "feeder" factor affected shares in Manchester United after their defeat by Juventus, which knocked the price 4p lower.

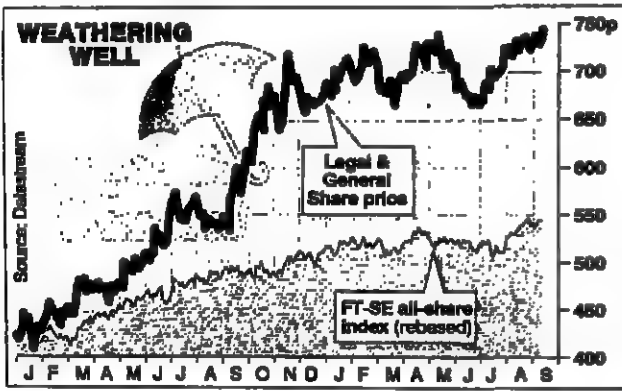
17p to 745 1/2p as analysts upgraded forecasts for the full year to around £300 million.

Reports that Eurotunnel had agreed a debt for equity deal with its banks prompted a rise of 11p to 12 1/2p. Also moving ahead was Railtrack, which reversed recent profit losses to add 14 1/2p to 28 1/2p.

Gloom settled on TLG, formerly Thorn Lighting, casting a small shadow on the gener-

on international markets as worries grew over renewed tension in Iraq.

Shell announced a near 12 per cent rise in its interim dividend to 14 1/2p and the shares rose 3p to 969 1/2p. Higher oil prices in the first half helped fuel the 59 per cent increase by Enterprise Oil in net income to £73.8 million. The expected improvement failed to excite the shares.



WEATHERING WELL

Legal & General Shares price

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S

which slid 2 1/2p to 522p. British Gas, nudged ahead 1p to 199 1/2p after failing to inspire analysts with first-half figures and an unchanged dividend.

The group says it is making progress with negotiations over take-or-pay contracts, but analysts are keeping a keener eye on developments in its row with the regulator.

Shares in ScottishTV edged ahead by 3p to 702 1/2p after it revealed record profits of £10.3 million. It also announced a link up with BSkyB to broadcast a new channel, Sky Scottish, from November. Shares in BSkyB rose 8 1/2p to 571 1/2p.

More evidence of brighter times for the housing market emerged as John Laing, the building group, reported an improving picture and the return of the "feeder" factor. The shares responded with a 13 1/2p increase to 259p.

Concorde Properties, buoyed by Laing, moved up 4p to 70p on heavy turnover as more than three million shares changed hands.

The profits warning earlier in the week continued to leave a sour taste at Matthew Clark, the drinks group. Its shares fell a further 12p to 343 1/2p while HP Bulmer, the cider group, firmed ahead 15p to 567 1/2p after an upbeat trading statement at its annual meeting.

A cautious note from BZW, the broker, took the gloss off ICI, which fell 7p to 838 1/2p, while record passenger figures for August prompted a modest 1 1/2p rise to 472 1/2p at BAA.

Inspect, the chemicals group that received a 98 per cent take-up of its £101.5 million rights issue saw its shares close 8 1/2p higher.

GILT-EDGED: After a quiet morning, trading picked up in the afternoon with prices pushed higher following stronger markets in Germany and the US.

In futures, the December series closed up 1/2p at £106 1/2p on volume of 47,000 contracts. In shorts, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 rose 1/2p to £103 1/2p, while in longs, the Treasury 8 per cent 2015 rose 1/2p to £98 1/2p.

NEW YORK: Stocks were mixed at midday, with the Dow Jones industrial average just a whisker away from its record high of 5,796.10 after the US producer price index showed tame inflation. The Dow was up 34.77 points to 5,789.69.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday): Dow Jones 5789.69 (+34.77) S&P Composite 671.50 (+4.22)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 20443.93 (+127.11)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 11251.72 (+15.36)

Amsterdam: SOE Index 564.90 (+2.83)

Sydney: All Ordinaries 2226.6 (+4.7)

Frankfurt: DAX 2570.32 (+3.52)

Singapore: Straits Times 2116.44 (+13.46)

Brussels: C20 Index 1231.5

Paris: CAC-40 2065.37 (+27.31)

Zurich: SMI 773.80 (+7.78)

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TEMPUS

Take-or-pay day

HOW do you get out of an onerous contract?

There are only three exit routes: run, sue or pay.

British Gas clearly cannot run from its take-or-pay obligations while litigation is messy and inconclusive, even assuming BG could find in the contracts a sufficiently ambiguous clause on which to hang a writ.

The only plausible solution is to pay, but BG has a problem. To be let off the hook requires cash up front, representing the present value of the contracts to the oil companies. BG Energy would get a nice discount for early payment, but it has no money to pay off the £15 billion take-or-pay liability.

However it does have some attractive assets, namely the Morecambe Bay gasfield. Moreover, Shell and BP have cash coming out of their ears and are unlikely to be clamouring for ready money. What is certainly being dis-

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Enterprise Oil

THE enthusiasm of oil companies for the Gulf of Mexico is in inverse ratio to their dwindling interest in South-East Asia. Enterprise has had little success in Indonesia, a factor which three years ago left the City with the feeling that it was a busted flush in exploration terms. Yesterday's results proved them wrong, with Norway and Italy filling the gap. But the decision to move into the Gulf, where every oilman and his dog has put up a tent, raises a concern that Enterprise will be out of its depth.

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RTZ-CRA

SURE enough, after RTZ-CRA revealed the detail of the wounds caused by Sumitomo and the copper price, shares in the Anglo-Australian mining group rose.

The reaction is sensible, given the likelihood that copper has reached a floor. There could still be some downward pressure as investors who took over long Sumitomo positions reduce their holdings. But demand for base metals is said to be buoyant in Asia and rising in Europe, although America could weaken. While the outlook on demand for RTZ's products looks broadly favourable, the bulls tend to ignore the supply side which is also looking buoyant.

RTZ is not the only mining group with ambitious expansion plans and copper is ready for a production surge with huge mines in Chile expected to come on stream. The merger with CRA reduced RTZ's exposure to the

RTZ-CRA

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United Biscuits

UNITED BISCUITS results did, as hoped, show that recovery is under way

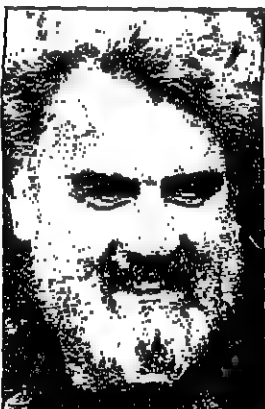
THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Shoe boss on song

THE British Shoe Corporation, the hard-up footwear maker of Sears, appears to have got off on the wrong foot after splashing out £40,000 on corporate entertainment for this weekend. Rebecca Cotterell, BSC's managing director, who is hosting dinner for 50 in Hyde Park, where The Last Night of the Proms will be transmitted live, seems to have her diary dates in a muddle. "Proms in the Park" falls on the same weekend as the Düsseldorf Shoe Fair, a high point in the cordwainery calendar. Some invitees have made their apologies, but Cotterell will be outside the Albert Hall waving her Union Jack.

Local hero

BILLY CONNOLLY had his nose put out of joint while filming in Iceland for British Gas. The Big Yin was hidden in a trailer away from the press to keep him quiet about the Goldfish credit card, when a local Icelandic TV crew started to lobby British Gas for an interview with "the star". But when Connolly was given permission to decamp from his confine, the Icelandic press pack looked a little let down. It wasn't Connolly they wanted to interview, but Sven Nijqvist, a cameraman on the set and a massive star in Iceland.



Connolly: confined

Wiped out

RAPIDLY recovering Jeyes Group has launched a booklet to accompany its eponymous liquids expansion into the gardening market. The book details alternative uses for Jeyes Fluid, other than as a household cleaner. Alas, two of the more interesting suggestions have been left out. In South African townships, people drink Jeyes Fluid as a morning bracer. And one 80-year-old woman, who used the fluid to cure her warts as a child, has bathed in it every day since then.

Special offer

READERS of *Cunard World*, the magazine sent out yesterday to regular customers of the cruise line, may well have been tempted by the pages featuring cruises on the *Cunard Countess* to such ideal winter destinations as Martinique, Barbados and St Lucia. Only there's one slight problem — Kvaerner, the Norwegian shipping and engineering group, and Cunard's new owners, announced the £16 million sale of the *Cunard Countess* earlier this week to Awani Cruise Line, an Indonesian company. Cunard has already started making arrangements for passengers returning on the ship after it changes hands at the end of October.

BAD luck NatWest Stockbrokers. The Investors Chronicle 1996 Stockbroker Award for advisory and discretionary portfolio management went to SocGen Investment Management. To rub it in, the winning team of six from SocGen, including Tim Brocklebank-Fowler, Victor Van Boelen and Peter Hancock, were the 1995 winners for NatWest Stockbrokers.

MORAG PRESTON

The TUC sees job security as the key economic issue, says Philip Bassett

WHEN Britain's union leaders stand up this morning to sing *Auld Lang Syne* as the traditional end of the TUC conference in Blackpool, its opening words — "Should old acquaintance be forgot?" — will be sharply pointed in the light of the clash between unions and their old acquaintances in the Labour Party over new strike measures.

But the unions' anger is not just at their feeling of being outmanoeuvred, upstaged and bested by the party leadership — though they have been — but also because the row has obscured much of the unions' own work-based agenda for the week, and in particular what they see as the central economic issue of job security.

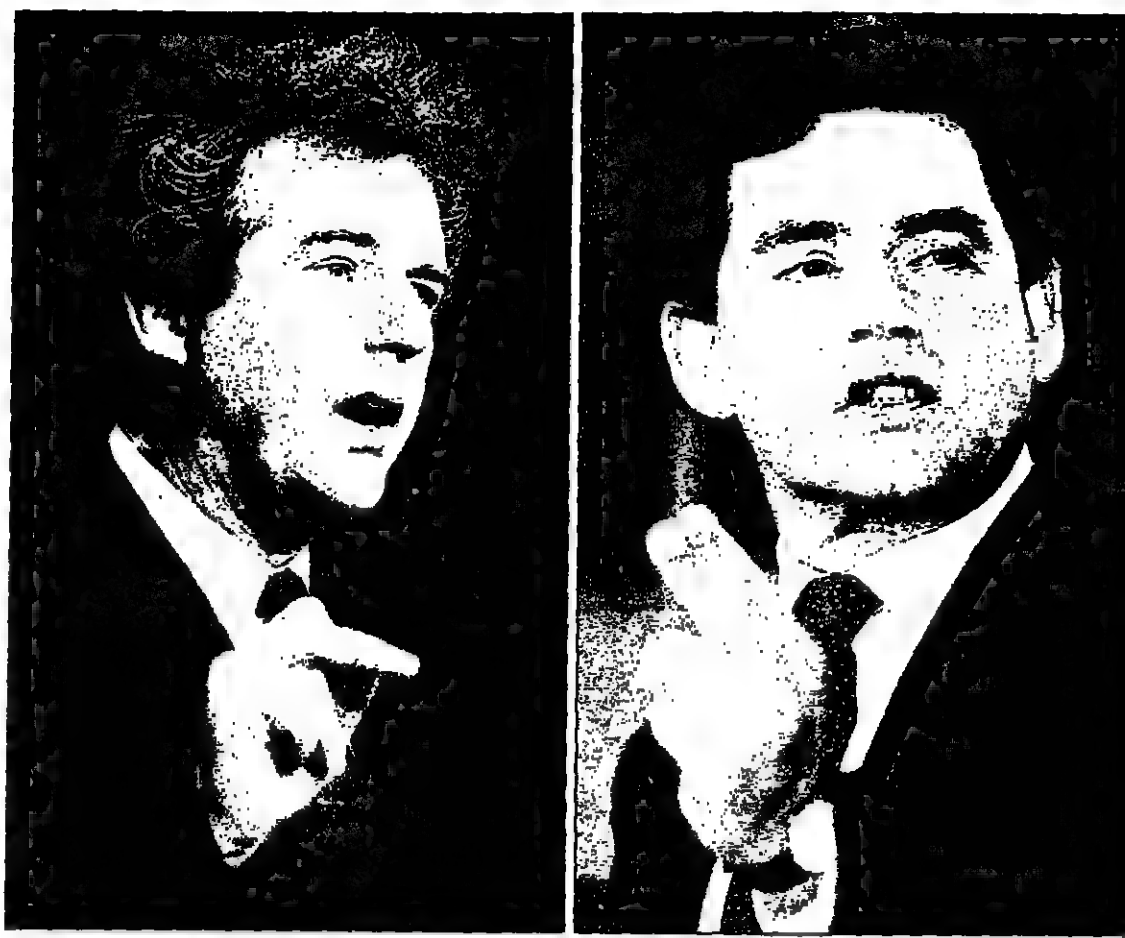
William Waldegrave, Treasury Chief Secretary, yesterday added fuel to the fire by insisting, in a speech in the City, that the Government's programme of labour market deregulation has led directly to job creation.

Mr Waldegrave admitted it would be crazy to deny that people had feelings of job insecurity, but he insisted the picture was nowhere near as bleak as it is painted. The worst way to try to tackle those feelings would be to take "allegedly benign" actions to protect jobs, such as signing the European social chapter, as both Labour and the unions are proposing, he said.

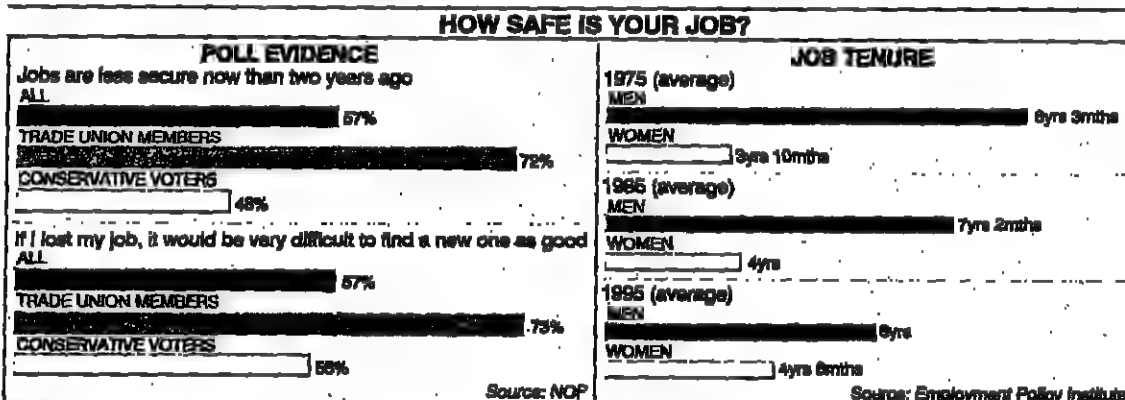
United, Labour and the unions hit back, with Peter Hain, Labour employment spokesman, saying: "Job insecurity is endemic." Attacking the revolving door economy of fast firings, he said: "Mr Waldegrave is guilty of catastrophic complacency."

Rodney Bickerstaffe, head of Union, the TUC's biggest union, said: "According to Waldegrave, Britain's labour markets are full of happy people in well-paid, stable jobs, relishing the opportunities of the free market. For the fat cats, that's absolutely true. But everyone else has to confront a very different reality." In job insecurity endemic, or is it as Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, insisted, merely a "state of mind"? Is the new labour market, with its allegedly greater flexibility, a permanent reason job insecurity will be here to stay? Or is it, in the economic dynamism that its adherents say flexibility engenders, the new means to new jobs?

Paul Gregg, of the London School of Economics, says: "Job insecurity is not a state of mind. It is real." In Blackpool this week trade unionists gave example after example of the new job market: people working in textiles for £1.20 an hour, and fired at whim; in retailing, in hotels, in distribution, in catering; in engineering and in construction too. And in



The views of William Waldegrave, left, on job security clash sharply with those of Gordon Brown



banking, insurance, and finance. "Nowhere is now safe," said Roger Lyons, head of MSF, the general technical union. With unemployment falling again this week by 15,600 to 2.11 million, the lowest level for more than five years, labour market analysts are struggling with the question of why feelings of job insecurity should be so widespread.

Mr Waldegrave's claims clash sharply with Labour. Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, asserts that "the dominant feature of British economic life is widespread insecurity. Thousands are experiencing downward mobility, millions live in fear of losing their job".

Figures from NOP this week show almost three fifths of British voters believe their jobs are less secure than they were two years ago and 55 per cent believe that jobs will be less secure again in two years' time.

Downsizing gurus, such as Stephen Roach, the Wall Street analyst,

may now have recanted their previous espousal of the theory, but British companies have yet to follow suit. MSF says that a new survey of its representatives in 400 workplaces around Britain shows that two thirds say their company employs fewer people than it did five years ago.

About the same number believe that downsizing is bad for their company.

Unions, of course, may be part of the problem, as analysis published by *The Times* this week suggested: a clear association between areas of union strength and lower employment growth. Ministers insist, too, that moves like yesterday's indication from Brussels that the European Commission wants to remove the derogations that apply to UK employees such as junior doctors and transport workers from the 48-hour working time directive, which Labour and the unions approve, will lead to further job losses — as will more strikes like those in the Post Office

and the railways. While unemployment has now been falling roughly since the end of 1992, the Government's *Labour Force Survey* shows that more than four million people in Britain still want a job — about twice the number of people officially unemployed.

Even after several years of economic recovery now, one in ten men are still officially unemployed and still actively seeking work — while many more have dropped out of the labour market altogether. The Employment Policy Institute points out that the rise in the number of "economically inactive" men is equal to half the fall in male unemployment from its peak at the end of 1992. Education is sucking in some, but so-called early retirement is taking up many people in a move that may see as hidden unemployment. Unemployment has spread its net more widely than it did in the 1980s recession. Then it was largely a phenomenon of the old

industrialised areas in the North, Midlands, Scotland and Wales as manufacturing shed two million jobs. In the 1990s, middle-class, white-collar workers in the South have been hit too. Over the past five years, government studies show that more than ten million people, well over a third of the workforce, experienced at least one spell of unemployment, indicating that joblessness has now touched most households, directly or indirectly, through friends, or family. One in five households in Britain with working age people currently has no adult in paid employment.

Certainly, as Mr Waldegrave spelt out yesterday, employment is up. LFS figures show that in the three years to last winter, the number in employment rose by 724,000, or 3.4 per cent, to 21.9 million. Of those, as Mr Waldegrave was also right to claim, most were permanent jobs — 430,000 as against 294,000 temporary jobs.

But it is the acceleration of more flexible and, as employees see it, more insecure employment that underlies greater insecurity. The rise in permanent jobs may be bigger in terms of actual numbers than temporary jobs, but proportionately, temporary work saw a 23 per cent increase over the period and permanent work a rise of only 2 per cent. Even full-time, permanent employees know that many around them are temporary and vulnerable. And that in turn increases the vulnerability of those in permanent jobs.

Within the total of permanent jobs, too, by far the larger increase has been in part-time work: up by 364,000, or 8.2 per cent, out of the total, while full-time jobs went up by only 66,000, or 0.4 per cent. Two thirds of the extra people at work since unemployment began to fall are working part-time.

Even for those in work, the average length of time they stay in a job is falling. In 1975, average job tenure was six years, one month. Now it is five years and two months. Tenure has gone up slightly for women, as more have returned to work earlier after having children. But for men it has plummeted, from eight years three months in 1975 to six years now, a drop of 25 per cent in two decades.

Within increasingly sharp global competitiveness, greater economic inactivity, still high unemployment, a rise in non-core forms of employment and falling job tenure all add up to greater insecurity. Business may like the flexibility this offers but it is worried about the impact on loyalty and recruitment and training costs, and so is becoming more equivocal about it than some politicians.

A substantial slice of the evidence runs against Mr Waldegrave, though that will not stop him repeating his claims, and the issue of jobs and job security will remain at the fore in the run-up to the general election.

Not everyone would agree with John Monks, TUC General Secretary, when he says job insecurity is rampant. But as the TUC's leaders return to dealing with the realities of work, there are growing numbers who prefer his analysis to that of Mr Waldegrave and that may have its own impact at the polls.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Implications of Macallan bid

From Mrs Margaret Ewing, MP for Moray (SNP Parliamentary Leader)

Sir, The circumstances leading to the takeover of Macallan should concern every institutional and small investor in the land. All small minority shareholders saw the value of their holding slashed from 187p to 152.5p as a result of the actions of Highland Distillers and Suntory.

As Magnus Linklater said (*The Times*, August 22), before the takeover, Highland Distillers acquired a 26 per cent stake in Macallan from Remy Cointreau. He did not mention that Highland were shareholders in Remy nor that the price paid was used in retrospect to justify the discounted price paid in the takeover bid.

Together, Highland and Suntory held 51 per cent of Macallan. They formed a joint venture company to acquire remaining shares at a discount to the market price. Acting together, they could, as majority shareholders, remove dissidents from the board. What then is to stop shareholders in any other company from acting in concert to wield a majority of votes and force a takeover to the direct and immediate prejudice of the remainder of minority shareholders?

Yet the Takeover Panel failed to act. Not only has this resulted in desolation in the many households of newly redundant whisky workers in Speyside, it should also be the subject of immediate investigation by the Government through an independent body of experts including representatives of major institutional investors. Yours faithfully, MARGARET EWING, Burns Cottage, Lossiemouth.

High street myth

From Mr Walter Felman Sir, "High street trade at best levels since 1980s says CBI" (*The Times*, September 6).

Retail sales may be increasing, but certainly not in the high streets of this country, where shopkeepers mourn the spending levels of past years, and charity shops are the only ones to flourish.

When will the CBI and the press realise that people don't spend their money in the high streets any longer?

Yours faithfully, WALTER FELMAN, Marc Ashley Ltd, 59-61 The Broadway, NW7.

Gucci survives family feud to be a fashion icon again

James Bone on a man who gives value with a famous luxury name



Domenico De Sole ties Gucci to quality at a fair price

Domenico De Sole is a survivor of one of the epic corporate feuds of recent years: the bitter fighting that racked Gucci, the luxury goods maker.

Signor De Sole, now president and chief executive of Gucci Group, witnessed the two wings of the Gucci family battle for control in the 1980s — only to see the investment bank that bought the loser's half-share take on the winner. He says: "I say jokingly that we had World War I and World War II at Gucci. I am a veteran of both. World War I was inter-family feuding. World War II was Maurizio Gucci and Investcorp."

An engaging Harvard-educated Italian who combines American frankness with the old-fashioned courtesy of his native Rome, Signor De Sole, 51, can afford to make light of his experience. Having taken Gucci 100 per cent public this year, he has repositioned the troubled company with one of the fastest turnarounds in fashion industry history, making its popular brand name and interlocking GGs a powerful engine of growth.

Gucci's net revenues rose to \$500.1 million in fiscal 1995, a jump of almost 90 per cent from fiscal 1994's \$263.6 million. Signor De Sole says he is "comfortable" with analysts' projections of \$800-\$840 million in sales for the current year, with earnings per share of around \$2.25.

"I brought to Italy a very American approach to business," he explains. "I am very open. No games. No politics. I communicate very aggressively. I have strong feelings. I lived through the problems Gucci had. I know what I do not want." He was a tax

prestigious Washington law firm, when he was recruited by Maurizio Gucci in 1984 to head Gucci America Inc, then under investigation by the US Internal Revenue Service.

With Maurizio Gucci feuding with his uncle Aldo and cousin Paolo for control of the parent company, Signor De Sole struck a \$20 million deal with the tax man and revived US sales from \$45 million in 1984 to \$140 million by the end of the decade.

When the Bahrain-based Investcorp bought a half-share in the parent company in 1987, Signor De Sole soon became trapped in a new battle between the investment bank and the remaining half-owner, Maurizio Gucci. He professes personal affection for Maurizio Gucci

in Milan last year in an attack believed to be linked to a casino deal. But even before Maurizio Gucci sold to Investcorp in 1993, the two had fallen out over the company's direction.

Summoned to Florence by Investcorp, Signor De Sole was named general director of Gucci Group in October 1994 and became president and CEO in July 1995. He describes the three ingredients of his success as style, quality, and value.

He says: "We felt Gucci had to become a fashion leader. That was the first decision we took. The second thing was the quality. The third, which has been underestimated, was that I felt we were not doing it

great value, within a luxury brand. I think we offer great products at a great price."

Once in charge, he cancelled the plastic and canvas products that had devalued the Gucci name; toured Tuscany to restore confidence of the small artisans who assemble many of Gucci's leather goods; and spent heavily on advertising. Gucci also hit gold with Tom Ford, an American hired as design director in 1990 and promoted to creative director in 1994. Ford's velvet hip-huggers and satin shirts made Gucci chic for Hollywood stars and pop musicians in a way it had not been since the Fifties and Sixties. The new fashion wunderkind, Ford won the Council of Fashion Designers of America's 1995 International Designer Award and a host of other prizes.

With Gucci still selling far fewer leather goods than Louis Vuitton and fewer silks than Hermes, Signor De Sole believes the company has plenty of opportunities to continue its explosive growth. He points to Germany as one major unexploited market, and says there is also potential in Japan. The company is exploring fast-growing emerging markets such as China and Russia, and by the middle of fiscal 1997 plans to have opened 20 new Gucci stores worldwide. As part of the programme of refurbishing existing outlets, Signor De Sole plans to expand Gucci's London shop in Sloane Street, which he says "performs very well."

He expresses pride that the turnaround was achieved by people like himself and Tom Ford. "I think in business you don't want too many people. You want a few people well-

JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP plc

Department stores and Waitrose supermarkets

Consolidated unaudited results for the half year ended 27 July 1996

	1996 £m	1995 £m	change %
Sales (including VAT)	1488.0	1286.6	14
Trading profit	90.2	57.8	56
Interest	12.1	12.3	
Profit before taxation	78.1	45.5	72
Taxation	27.5	13.9	
Preference dividends	0.1	0.1	
Surplus available for profit sharing and retentions	50.5	31.5	60

Sales increased by £89 million (14%) in the department store division and £93 million (14%) in Waitrose supermarkets.

Profit
Pre-tax profit increased by £33 million (72%).

Profit sharing
Allocation between retentions and profit sharing is determined when the results for the year are known.

For further details telephone 0171-828 1000 extension 6220.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

10

Eager buyers send shares higher

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	999	998	997	996	995	994	993	992	991	990	989	988	987	986	985	984	983	982	981	980	979	978	977	976	975	974	973	972	971	970	969	968	967	966	965	964	963	962	961	960	959	958	957	956	955	954	953	952	951	950	949	948	947	946	945	944	943	942	941	940	939	938	937	936	935	934	933	932	931	930	929	928	927	926	925	924	923	922	921	920	919	918	917	916	915	914	913	912	911	910	909	908	907	906	905	904	903	902	901	900	899	898	897	896	895	894	893	892	891	890	889	888	887	886	885	884	883	882	881	880	879	878	877	876	875	874	873	872	871	870	869	868	867	866	865	864	863	862	861	860	859	858	857	856	855	854	853	852	851	850	849	848	847	846	845	844	843	842	841	840	839	838	837	836	835	834	833	832	831	830	829	828	827	826	825	824	823	822	821	820	819	818	817	816	815	814	813	812	811	810	809	808	807	806	805	804	803	802	801	800	799	798	797	796	795	794	793	792	791	790	789	788	787	786	785	784	783	782	781	780	779	778	777	776	775	774	773	772	771	770	769	768	767	766	765	764	763	762	761	760	759	758	757	756	755	754	753	752	751	750	749	748	747	746	745	744	743	742	741	740	739	738	737	736	735	734	733	732	731	730	729	728	727	726	725	724	723	722	721	720	719	718	717	716	715	714	713	712	711	710	709	708	707	706	705	704	703	702	701	700	699	698	697	696	695	694	693	692	691	690	689	688	687	686	685	684	683	682	681	680	679	678	677	676	675	674	673	672	671	670	669	668	667	666	665	664	663	662	661	660	659	658	657	656	655	654	653	652	651	650	649	648	647	646	645	644	643	642	641	640	639	638	637	636	635	634	633	632	631	630	629	628	627	626	625	624	623	622	621	620	619	618	617	616	615	614	613	612	611	610	609	6
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ALPHABETICAL GUIDE TO DEGREE VACANCIES: ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

TODAY'S listing of degree vacancies in engineering and technology is the last to appear this year.

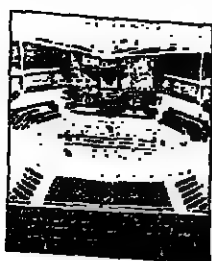
The entries on this page demonstrate that there are plenty of openings for students in clearing. Even traditional universities whose places in other subjects were filled long ago, have room for suitably-qualified applicants.

Few courses have been removed from the service since the engineering listing was first published almost four weeks ago. Many programmes, especially in the new universities and colleges of higher education, will remain open until the start of term.

An asterisk shows courses are part of modular schemes, available in a variety of combinations. All the others are identified by the codes used in the Ucas handbook.

AERONAUTICAL/AIR TRANSPORT ENGINEERING

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MUSIC 1

A muted cheer as the Hallé Orchestra opens Manchester's new concert hall, the Bridgewater



MUSIC 2

The Proms hears an exhilarating performance of Messiaen's vast *Turangalila Symphony*

THE TIMES ARTS



MUSIC 3

... and, in complete contrast, an airy and supple concert of little-known Bach choral music



THEATRE

Adrian Noble's *Midsummer Night's Dream* production seems off-colour on its return

MUSIC: Gerald Larner is distinctly underwhelmed by the Hallé's new home, the Bridgewater Hall

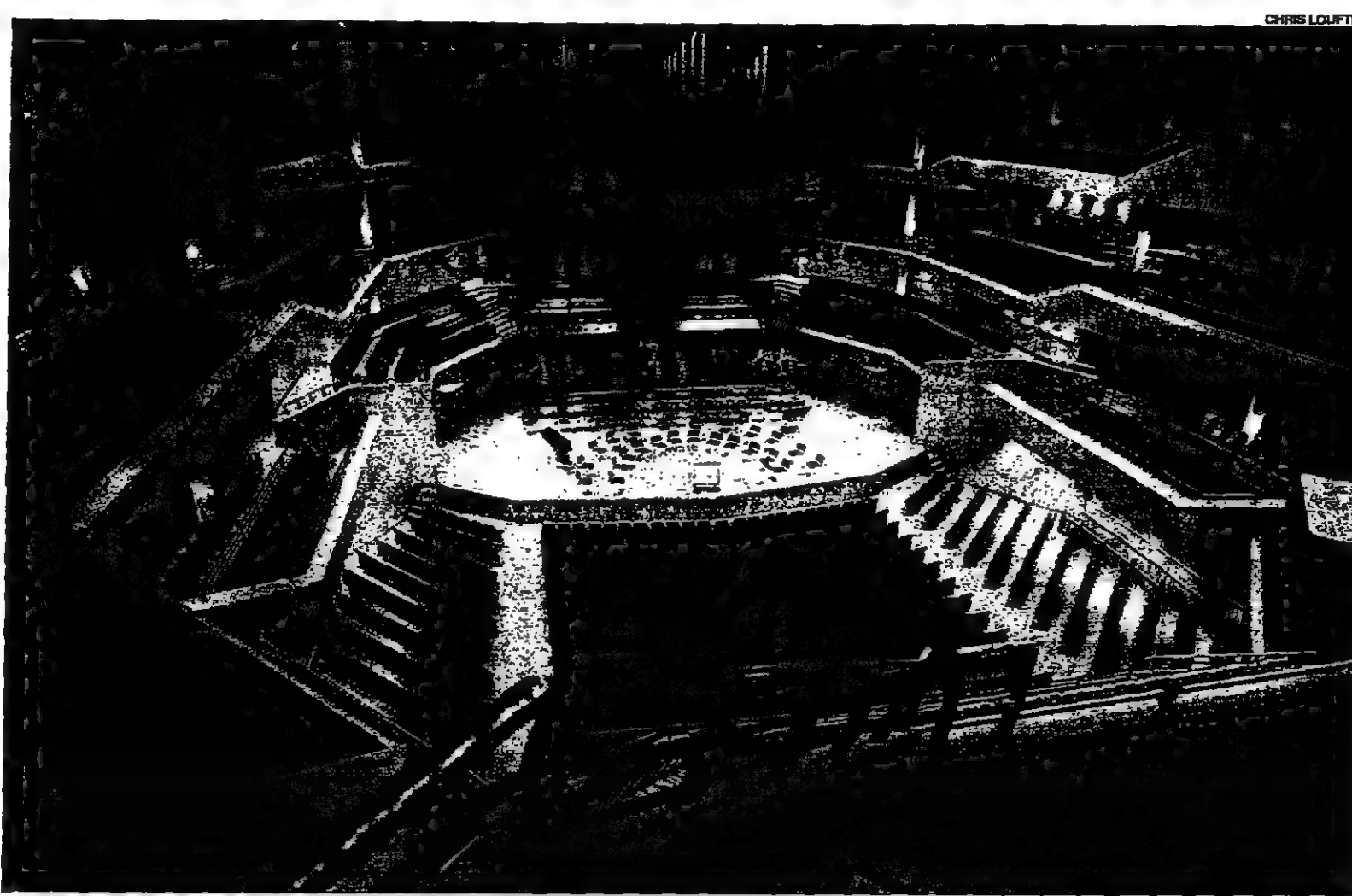
Distant voices, stilted vibes

Let's just start again, shall we? Or better still, let's not have a formal start at all. Let's wander into the Bridgewater Hall one day, take a good seat for a well-designed programme and afterwards find the space to reflect on the accumulated impressions, without having them immediately jostled by a brass band in the foyer. We should then be able to admire the qualities of the hall, the taste of those who run it and the discrimination of those who promote concerts there.

In the meantime, for what it is worth after an opening-concert experience based on none of those conditions, I can tell you that whereas the Marple Band in the ground-floor foyer was very loud, the Hallé Orchestra in the auditorium itself sounded disappointingly remote — as least from where I was sitting.

In spite of the heroic vocal efforts of Thomas Allen and the Hallé Choir, *Belshazzar's Feast* made far less than its authentic impact. Clearly there is nothing magical about the Bridgewater Hall: the vineyard terracing, designed to increase capacity while enhancing intimacy, does not have the desired effect.

Early reports of the Arup acoustic indicated that it was lively but bass-heavy. Efforts made since then to reduce the bass seem to have turned the whole spectrum. I am assured, on the other hand, that the instrumentalists on the platform can hear each other, which is an important feature, since it will surely give them the confidence to seek out the positive qualities of the acoustic and play them for all they are worth. This is certainly what the Hallé did in the Free Trade Hall.



The auditorium of the purpose-built Bridgewater Hall may accommodate large audiences but its acoustic still leaves a great deal to be desired

So my immediate "take me back to the Free Trade Hall" reaction on hearing that orchestra play the *Enigma Variations* in the first half of the opening concert in the Bridgewater Hall must be dismissed as premature. Besides, Kent Nagano seemed to be presenting the score more for its subtleties than for its more

obviously sensational effects. And it is true, all those subtleties were clearly audible even two tiers up on the left. Also clearly noticeable, at the end of the louder variations, was a very healthy reverbération time. The problem was in reconciling the irreducible evidence that this is not a dry acoustic with the unexciting

effect of orchestral music performed within it. But not even Birmingham's Symphony Hall, whose supremacy so far remains unchallenged, sounded at its best at this stage. An unfortunate victim of the opening arrangements in Manchester was the new work specially commissioned for the occasion from George Benjamin.

What the audience wanted to hear, after Elgar's dread version of the national anthem, was something to make a big splash — a *Pomp and Circumstance* march, perhaps, or the Walton *Crown Imperial* offered as an encore. Following something of that kind, Benjamin's beautifully scored *Sometimes Voices* (for

baritone soloist, chorus and orchestra), which eschews fanfares for the poetry of Caliban's "sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not", would have made its sensitive point. In the event, eloquent though William Dausley was in the solo role, the first-night audience were left wondering what hadn't hit them.

BBC PROMS: A 20th-century treat by a French composer, and a welcome performance of Bach from Belgium

HENRI Dutilleul does not even rate a mention in two of the best-known histories of Western music, yet he is undoubtedly one of the major French composers of the century. Now in his eightieth year, Dutilleul has at last begun to make the breakthrough, and among the leading proponents of his music are Yan Pascal Tortelier and the BBC Philharmonic.

Not only have they recorded his music, but they are presenting a number of his works in a Berlioz/Dutilleul festival in Manchester next month. Wednesday

night's Prom offered a taster of that celebration with a performance of the violin concerto *L'arbre des songes* by Olivier Charlier. The work may have been inspired by a poem of Baudelaire's, but the subtitle ("The Tree of Dreams") offers a clue, according to the composer, in that "the constant multiplication and renewal of its branches is the lyrical essence of the tree".

BBC PO/Tortelier
Albert Hall

That fertility of invention is evident throughout the work. The solo part of the fleet, mercurial second movement, brilliantly dispatched by Charlier, at times proclaims its allegiance to Stravinsky's *Soldier's*

Tale. But that is only part of a rich tapestry, for Dutilleul has remained open to new developments.

Nothing about Dutilleul is predictable or easily categorisable. What, for example, is one to make of the orchestral tuning-up integrated into the third interlude? The intention is clearly humorous but the gesture lacks the biting ironic edge of a Schnittke.

A similar ambivalence informs Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony*, the massive ten-movement structure of which seems to embrace a cosmos of ecstasy, both creative and destructive. Some performances make it seem more prolix, even tedious, than others. Tortelier's was so exhilaratingly agile, so wild, in movements such as *Joy of the Blood of the Stars* that one was swept up into its fervour.

Jean-Yves Thibaudet was the irreplaceable pianist.

BARRY MILLINGTON

A foretaste of Henri

MYSTERIES OF ANCIENT CHINA

The British Museum's magnificent *Mysteries of Ancient China* show opens today. Richard Cork continues a daily series highlighting the exhibition's glories

IMAGINARY BIRD

Placed next to the coffin of the Marquis Yi of Zeng, in a tomb dating from the 5th century BC, this exceptional bird seems about to take flight.

Its straight legs appear to be bracing themselves for action, and the two small wings stretch outwards as if preparing for lift-off. The astonishingly thin, attenuated neck suggests that the bird is a crane, but the antler-like forms curving above its head introduce a surreal dimension.

This is, above all, a legendary bird, and an inscription on the beak discloses that it was "made for the eternal use of the marquis".

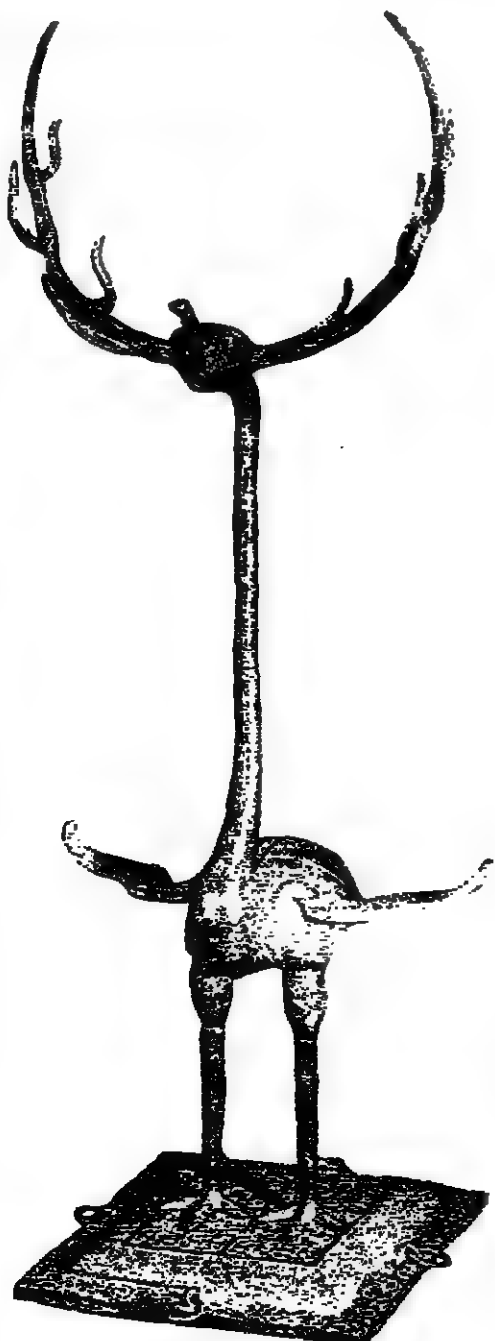
Unusually large and expensively crafted, the bird was doubtless intended to protect the tomb from evil spirits. But it may also have been meant to transport the spirit of the marquis on his journeys through the universe. Hence the bird's expectant air, resting on a stand cast with refined patterns of clouds and serpents but eager to leave them behind.

All the same, the notion that the marquis would fly off to the heavens on its back must remain speculative. Aerial paradises were thought, at that period, to be the domain of gods and spirits alone. So the marquis would be fortunate indeed if the bird had carried him away to the stars.

© *Mysteries of Ancient China*, sponsored by The Times, continues at the British Museum to Jan 5. Admission £5; bookings on 0171-420 0000

TOMORROW

A soldier from the astonishing terracotta army



Joys heard but not seen

WITH Britain on the fringe of the European concert circuit — at least in the field of early music — it is probable that London audiences will have heard many established continental groups only on CD. There was a time, some years ago, when such groups might have stayed away because our wealth of home-grown historically-aware ensembles made visiting Britain seem like taking coals to Newcastle. But nowadays the costs involved are the determining factor.

All the more important, then, that large-scale festivals and concert series such as the Proms make the effort to bring over much-recorded but rarely heard groups such as Philippe Herreweghe's Collegium Vocale of Ghent, who starred in Tuesday's late evening Prom.

Herreweghe and the Collegium Vocale recorded their all-Bach programme several years ago and were clearly on familiar ground, although not all the pieces were well-known to the audience.

Bach's Mass in G minor is essentially a compilation of previously composed cantata movements, slightly reworked to accommodate the Latin text of the *Kyrie* and *Gloria*. Thanks to undue emphasis, stemming from the aesthetic values of the later 19th century, on the "work" as an original masterpiece of inspiration, Bach scholars and performers have generally dismissed the piece as no more than an example of the hard-pressed composer having to borrow from his own musical

great for having been taken down from the shelf, as was proved by the bubbly and highly original opening chorus of the *Gloria* (which Herreweghe repeated as a very enthusiastically received encore).

The Collegium Vocale, with its airy, supple approach, was at its best here. Elsewhere, notably in the motet *Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf*, and despite orchestral doubling of the vocal lines, a little more weight would have been welcome. Attention to the rhetoric of the text was, however, excellent throughout, especially in the

strikingly beautiful cantata with which it opened the programme: *Herr, Gehe Nicht ins Gericht* (BWV 105).

Of the quartet of soloists, the counter-tenor Andreas Scholl was outstanding, making his second memorable contribution to this year's Proms. In addition to an exceptionally clear and honeyed sound, Scholl has a remarkable sense of vocal line, his phrasing immaculate but not so short-breathed as to become mannered, as was the case to some extent with the American tenor James Taylor.

Peter Kooy is in many ways an ideal Bach bass (not many of those around), and the young soprano Vasiljka Jezovsek has a very promising future in this kind of repertoire — like Scholl, a sweet-toned but well-focused and lithe voice. All in all, a very enjoyable evening of Bach that was clearly much appreciated by the Prommers: more next year, please.

Collegium Vocale
Albert Hall

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POP 1

Rebirth of a great band: Mike Mills recalls the good and bad times of R.E.M.



POP 2

Could Kula Shaker's brand of Eastern retro soon be the biggest thing in Britpop?

THE TIMES
ARTS



POP 3

ZZ Top go some way towards restoring their reputation with the curiously named *Rhythm*



POP 4

... while the even more oddly named BR5-49 produce a scintillating 33 minutes

POP: David Sinclair talks to Mike Mills about R.E.M.'s return from the brink of death; plus new albums

Fables of the resurrection

Written off after the setbacks of the past year, R.E.M. are back at the top of the charts. Post-traumatic for the people?

Demoralised by a series of life-threatening illnesses on last year's *Monster* tour, battered by the departure of co-manager and "fifth band member" Jefferson Holt, drifting apart as individuals, and about to reach the end of their recording contract with Warner Bros... It is hard to believe that this was the unrelentingly bleak picture of R.E.M. being painted just two months ago. However, with their universally acclaimed album *New Adventures in Hi-Fi* newly installed at the top of the chart this week, and a fresh recording contract with Warner, said to be worth a tidy \$80 million, in the bag, it seems the obituaries were a bit premature. And after an hour in conversation with the band's ebullient bass and keyboard player Mike Mills, the very idea that R.E.M. might be about to throw in the towel simply seems preposterous.

That was never an option. All it takes is for one magazine to write a story about us breaking up, and everybody assumes they must have a reason for writing that story, therefore it must be true. But it's total bullshit. The fact is that when Bill Berry was ill, our dominant concern was his health. But when you're faced with mortality like that, you have to consider the future. Would Bill still be able to play? Would he still want to play? But nobody ever said, 'Oh my God! Let's quit the band!'

No sooner had Berry recovered from brain surgery in March 1995 to clip a ruptured aneurysm, than Mills himself had to undergo an emergency laparotomy to release an adhesiol on his intestine. Weeks later, when singer Michael Stipe was admitted to hospital with a hernia, just after the band had played a show in Prague that had already been postponed twice, it began to look as if R.E.M. had truly offended their gods.

"Everybody started saying the band was cursed or something. But any of these things could and would have happened under any other circumstances. If I'd been sitting at home watching television, I would have got those adhesions anyway."

"At the end of the day it made us realise how much we cared about each other and it made us realise that the most important things to us regarding the band are firstly our friendship with each other and secondly the great things that we can do together musically. We've come through far too much in the past 15 years to let illness break us up. We're no quitters."

On the subject of Holt's departure, Mills will say only that he is not allowed to talk about it for legal reasons. "We made an agreement when we signed that none of us would talk about what happened."

He is upbeat, in a matter-of-fact way, about the new recording contract with Warner, which secures the band's services for a further five albums. "As you well know, nobody sits down and writes us out a cheque for \$80 million. That's not what happens. The potential value of the deal, somewhere down the road, could approach \$80 million. But it's just a figure. It has nothing to do with why we make music. We won't make five records just because we have to. If we think we're starting to smell like dead fish as a band then we'll certainly reconstruct the deal."

Of course, all bands say that, but very few actually pack it in while they are ahead. Certainly, there are no signs of middle-age spread on the aptly titled *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*, much of which was written and partly recorded during soundchecks and in sundry locations while the group was on the road. Mills is a youthful 37 and the average age of the band is now pushing 40. Can they sustain the momentum that has earned them the annual Q magazine award of Best Act in the World Today on three occasions?

There's no road map for growing old as a rock 'n' roller. The Rolling Stones have taken one way, which is to make the tours more important than the albums. Another route is the one taken by Leonard Cohen or Van Morrison. They don't try to rock out like energetic kids, because that's not their nature, but they still deliver very powerful music. So there are various ways of approaching it. I'm very curious to see how we do it, but I certainly can't tell you how we'll do it now."

Presumably, a key factor in maintaining the magic must be the preservation of the unique personal chemistry that exists between the four of them. Mills, Stipe and Berry still live in and around Athens, Georgia (guitarist Peter Dinklage has moved to Seattle), but surely they must, by now, have shed the gang mentality that sustains all the best bands in their early days?

"As you get older, you each develop a more separate identity. That's inevitable. But the thing that keeps it going is the shared history that you have that nobody else knows. That never goes away. The experience of going out there, sink or swim, putting everything on the line to feed yourself... those are the things that, if you've been through it as a young band, give you the strength that you need to carry it off later on."

• *New Adventures in Hi-Fi* is out on Warner Bros.
• *R.E.M.'s Road Movie* (£12.99) will be released on video by Warner Vision on September 30



Mike Mills of R.E.M.: "Everybody started saying the band was cursed or something"

Shaker, the money-maker

KULA SHAKER

K (Columbia)
EXUDING a sense of destiny that is almost palpable, Kula Shaker have swept up on British pop's blind-side with so little help and such unerring force that there is little left for the rest of us to do but gasp in wonder. Although criticised for treading the same path as retro-specialists Ocean Colour Scene and the Charlatans, Kula Shaker have nevertheless struck a chord with younger fans who long to hear such traditional sounds produced by musicians of their own age-group.

Constructed and played with enthusiastic brilliance, *K* is one of those rare albums that will become a touchstone for a generation, marking the point at which the simple virtues of Britpop gave way to an altogether heavier and more psychedelic-sounding brand of Britrock. The parallel point in the 1960s would be when "progressive" heavyweights such as Chicago Transit Authority, Jethro Tull and Santana took over the reins from beat-boom groups such as the Yardbirds and the Animals.

There are plenty of memorable choruses such as on *Into the Deep* and *Start All Over*, which rub shoulders with blasts of pummeling, high-voltage rock 'n' roll, notably the singles *Hey Dude* and *Grateful When You're Dead*. And they spin a neat line in pseudo-Indian mysticism on *Govinda* and *Sleeping Jiva*. But what really sets the album apart is the way in which the numbers all contribute to the sense of an epic tale unfolding, especially the exotic textures of *Tatva* and mysterious portents of *Temple of the Everlasting Light*.

ZZ TOP
Rhythm (RCA 74321 394662)
IT IS a fine line between smart and stupid, as the man once said, and ZZ Top continue to tread it with regal aplomb. "Her castanets are enormous! Her bongos beat absolute," growls Billy Gibbons on *She's Just Killing Me*, a meat-and-potatoes, blues-rock groove which, like many others on *Rhythm*, prompts a mild sense of déjà vu. The album is dotted with the various madcap splashes of colour and humour that set the trio apart from the heavy-rock herd. Gibbons plays the whole of *Loaded* with what sounds like a faulty guitar lead, the instrument stuttering in and out of a heavily reverbed mix like a drunk negotiating a route home.

This is the blues with lashings of special Texan sauce.

BR5-49
BR5-49 (Arista 07822 18818)
IS IT a light number? A mail-order code? Or simply the dullest name in pop, especially for a band from the world of country music with its

POP ALBUMS

colourful assortment of outlaws, mavericks and the like?

But dull BR5-49 are not. Applying youthful vigour and modern playing techniques to the lost art of western swing and 1950s rockabilly, they continue to breathe new life into a neglected genre.

Seamlessly mixing their own compositions with long forgotten gems by Moon Mullican (*Cherokee Boogie*) and other old-timers, the band has produced an album to warm the hearts of anyone with even a sneaking affection for the music that provided the original bedrock of rock 'n' roll.

Although perfectly in keeping with the style, the playing time of just 33 minutes seems a trifle modest. But only one serious question remains. Did they have to call the album *BR5-49* as well?

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Later Volume One: Brit Beat (Island 524298)
THE television show *Later with*



Kula Shaker: sense of destiny

Jools Holland has won admiration for the way in which it encourages musicians from widely differing backgrounds to rub shoulders in a relaxed studio setting.

But when it comes to marketing a series of albums compiled from recordings of the show, the familiar demarcation lines quickly come into play. Volume One: *Brit Beat* thus collects performances by the usual roll call of one-word bands — Blur, Oasis, Pulp, Suede, Ash, Supergrass, Cast et al — and associated acts (from Paul Weller to Audiorise), but fans who want to broaden their scope will have to wait for subsequent volumes, including *World Beat* and *Slow Beats*, in the coming months.

An entertaining snapshot of one of the most vibrant eras of British pop, *Brit Beat* underlines the commitment of all these acts to live performance — a clue, perhaps, to the "movement's" striking success? *Elastica's* version of *Car Song* is especially brilliant, and Oasis's performance of *Wonderwall* — with Noel Gallagher singing in place of an indisposed Liam — is one of many moments that provide a sense of history in the making.

DAVID SINCLAIR

• *Later*... presents *Brit Beat*, BBC2, 8.30pm, Sunday. Edited repeat at 6.45pm on Monday.

Winning selection of score draws

COLIN TOWNS' MASK ORCHESTRA

Nowhere & Heaven (Provocateur Records PVC 1013)
LIKE Towns' debut hit-band jazz album, released to uniformly enthusiastic reviews last year, *Nowhere & Heaven* is packed with the graceful, subtly evocative but surprisingly accessible themes which have made him one of Britain's leading film and television composers, enthusiastically and faultlessly

played by a 17-piece band drawn from the country's top jazz players. The compositions, too, range from ambitious tone poems crammed with unexpected felicities of timbre and texture, through cream-smooth ballads to rambunctious Mingusian flag-wavers.

Unlike its predecessor, however, this double (for the price of a single) album features a vocalist, Maria Pia De Vito, whose moody, silken interpretations of Towns's lyrics and suitably dramatic treatment of

JAZZ ALBUMS

a Carol Ann Duffy poem, *Standing Female Nude*, serve to focus the feeling of wistful melancholy with which much of Towns's work is imbued. His scores for *Brother Cadfael* and the forthcoming *Ivanhoe* may reach many more ears than his jazz work, but it is for the wonderfully rich music contained on his big-band albums that Towns is likely to be remembered.

VAUGHAN HAWTHORNE-NELSON

Emergence (T.M.L. Records T.M.L. 001)
ALTHOUGH just 28, London-born alto player Vaughan Hawthorne-Nelson might easily have entitled this, his third album, *Re-emergence*, since it marks his reappearance on the British jazz scene after a seven-year absence during which he absorbed the musical lessons taught him at Berklee, studied counselling psychology and

worked in a therapeutic community home for young people.

His is a restless, keening saxophone sound, heavily influenced by John Coltrane. But the astringent tumble of notes which characterises Hawthorne-Nelson's most effective work on this intense, deeply-felt album demonstrates an equally profound debt to a living mentor, American alto man Bobby Watson.

CHRIS PARKER

Passing the torch song to a new generation

Charles Aznavour as teen idol? Jacques Brel hipper than Jarvis? Life really is a never-ending cabaret and Scott Walker is the one true god

THERE is a revival going on at the moment. Not another spate of grave-robbing retroism — retooled is Kula Shaker using the same effects pedals, harmonies, troupers, haircuts and philosophies as the Beatles without adding a single new ingredient: kind of like those post-restaurant that "reinvent" fish and chips by cooking it exactly like they do at Crystal Kebab Shop on the Holloway Road and charging £17 for it. No, it has nothing to do with that.

Revivalism is all about seeing pop music as a relay race — for instance, mid-1980s punk-pop band the Pixies looked well on course to world domination before they imploded in 1990, but Kurt Cobain picked up their baton and ran with it all the way to *In Utero*. Brian Wil-

son's brain turned into a hamster called Ian and went into hibernation from the 1960s onwards, but the Boo Radleys seem to have found a notebook with "My Plan to be a Genius, by Brian Wilson" written on it, and added a couple of astonishing chapters. Bananarama had to retire from their ten-year party in 1994, because of the prohibitive costs of babysitters, but the plucky Spice Girls are now drinking, dancing and getting on down in their honour. Revivalism is about current songwriters speculating about what their heroes would sound like if they lived in, say, West Brom-

wich in 1996, and then taking things one step further. So in a week when Pulp won yet another award for *Different Class*, it seems only right to look at the revival of which they are a part. Cabaret torch-singers and their lush, mordant orchestras are being reappraised after 20 years in the wilderness: Jacques Brel, Charles Aznavour, Serge Gainsbourg, Nancy Sinatra and Lee Hazlewood, Dusty Springfield and Scott Walker's back catalogues are being



CAITLIN MORAN

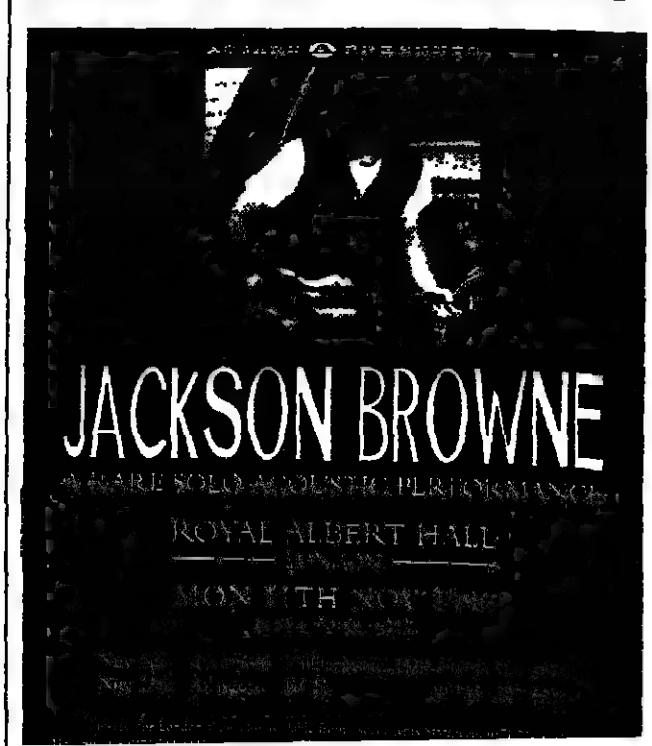
snapped up in charity shops for 50p and their influence is lending an autumnal hue to the charts. *Different Class* fairly reeks with their Brechtian moods: Jarvis's stretched phrasing on *Live Bed Show* is classic Aznavour, and the ghost of Jacques Brel's gloriously filthy tongue is rampant in *I Spy*, backed by an orchestra who seem to consist entirely of embittered Frenchmen spoiling for a revolution. Following on Pulp's heels are a dozen newer brands

who all obviously faint at the mention of Gene Pitney. The Divine Comedy's *Casanova* album uses the grandiosity of Scott Walker as a springboard for tales of a raging libido at war with morality; girls who just are not interested, and long-time rivals My Life Story have finally got a record deal for their *Mornington Crescent* album, allowing frontman and songwriter Jake Shillingford to indulge in the huge orchestral and cabaret glamour which obviously delight him. Going further underground, the impossibly beautiful debut album *Pioneer Soundtracks* by Jack mines

the darker side of torch-cabaret: the austere air of pre- and postwar Berlin, shabby spotlights and alcoholism through necessity. White Jazz has Anthony Reynolds hissing "Yes, yes, yes, yes", sounding like a kettle simultaneously boiling and orgasming, while the violinists seem to be trying to saw through their instruments with their bows.

For the same kind of thing, but altogether more wounded and reflective, Tindersticks have been putting out an album a year of exquisite broken cabaret that brings to mind Leonard Cohen singing lullabies in the middle of the Channel Tunnel.

So when you hear it on the radio, remember: this is not retroism, just the continuation of certain sounds.



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EDUCATION

City primaries raise standards

Urban schools are doing well despite the exam figures says Simon Midgley

Academics and school inspectors have long said that pupils in rich middle-class suburbs are not always doing better educationally than their peers in inner-city schools that take their pupils from disadvantaged catchment areas. Now, for the first time, there is evidence to prove it.

New data on the performance of primary schools in the west London borough of Wandsworth show that some inner-city schools achieve more progress with their disadvantaged children than apparently better-favoured schools do with their advantaged and forward pupils.

Those raising the achievement of their pupils most effectively are not necessarily the schools which achieved the best results in national curriculum tests at the age of seven. Nor, in turn, the data imply, will they be those schools that get the best raw results in the national league tables of achievement for 11-year-old pupils, which the Government plans to publish next March.

Wandsworth council has compared the results of the tests in the autumn at the age of seven last year of 1,700 primary school pupils with their results in tests three years earlier at the age of four.

The comparative data reveal that children start school with widely differing levels of knowledge of English, reading and mathematics, depending on their family backgrounds.

Some schools that appear to have achieved high results in tests at the age of seven were blessed with advantaged intakes three years earlier and might have been expected to have achieved even more progress with those pupils. Dr Stephen Strand, the head of



Pupils at Wandle Primary School in Wandsworth, inner London: making good progress in raising personal achievement

educational research at Wandsworth council, which has just produced a study paper on how children progressed, says that, conversely, some schools in disadvantaged areas have boosted their children's achievement "to an amazing degree and are very effective schools". Once you adjust the children's results at the age of seven for the added value given in their past three years of schooling, Dr Strand says, you get a different idea of which schools are the most effective.

Wandsworth is the first educational authority in the country that has been able to set the results of key stage one test results against the children's earlier assessments at the age of four. This is because it was the first education authority to introduce baseline

testing for four-year-olds in 1992. Baseline testing is now done in about half of all LEAs. "Some schools can be complacent," Dr Strand says. "If you have a fairly able intake,

in a fairly affluent middle-class area, you end up getting fairly good raw (key stage one test) results, but there is a danger that maybe you are not stretching the children

as much as you should be."

Conversely, he says, there is also evidence of schools in the more disadvantaged areas making good educational progress. One Wandsworth primary is taking very low-attaining pupils from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds and the pupils are making "phenomenal" progress.

But the study also reveals that even after adjusting pupils' achievements, allowing for factors such as relative poverty, social deprivation, ethnic and gender differences, some schools are still much more effective than others, Dr Strand says.

The difference between the most effective schools in the borough and the least effective was 0.6 of a national curriculum level. This, put more

simply, means that a pupil in the least effective school could be more than one year behind his peer in the most effective school.

National performance tables can be very misleading if you are going to interpret the raw results as a measure of the school's effectiveness," Dr Strand says.

The study paper also reveals that not only do girls start school with a higher level of educational achievement than boys, but that they get even further ahead in the first three years of schooling. This suggests, Dr Strand says, that we need to examine what is happening in primary schools, and at home, for an explanation of why there is this growing gap in achievement.

The study also reveals not only that children on free school meals enter primary schools with a lower achievement level than other pupils, but that they fall even further behind in the first three years.

On a positive note it found that children for whom English was a second language started school at a much lower baseline of achievement than their monolingual English-speaking peers, but rapidly caught up.

Dr Strand, who will be presenting his findings to the British Educational Research Conference in Lancaster today, says this probably reflects the substantial amount of support Wandsworth is able to give such children through Section 11 funding.

The authority could publish a league table of the relative achievements of its primary schools at the age of seven adjusted for added value, but it does not for fear of alienating head teachers in the borough's 58 primary schools. But the value added adjusted results for individual schools are made available to heads and to governors. They in turn inform parents of a school's relative strengths and weaknesses.

Dr Strand says that pupils who attend schools with relatively good raw results, but who are underachieving, might have done better at an effective school with apparently worse results.

Clearing works... but almost too well

Record A-level results have not led to chaos, says Catriona Davies

As a new academic year approaches, more than 273,000 students have already secured university places. For all the predictions of chaos after record A-level results, the figure is almost exactly the same as last year.

The clearing process — which matches to unfilled courses those students who do not have places after examination results are released — is drawing to the end of what looks like its most efficient year. Just over 33,000 applicants have so far found places this way, 2,500 above the figure for the same time last year.

But the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas) predicts that the final total will be slightly

more than 30,000 combinations. Yet it is not accompanied by a rise in the number of students taking higher education courses, because of freezes in government funding. So students are being faced with more choice of subject. With so many options, fewer students need to take unpopular courses at unpopular universities, and the places remain unfilled.

This year's improved A-level results have made it possible for the most popular universities to be stricter than ever about taking only students with the required A-level points. The effect of this on less popular universities, and on the whole clearing process, is less clear. Anne Richards of

'The places seem to be filling more slowly'

Central Lancashire thinks the university picked up a lot of students who made CLU an "insurance" option. Jess Enderby of Ucas attributes the increased number of students so far placed through clearing to a new system introduced this year.

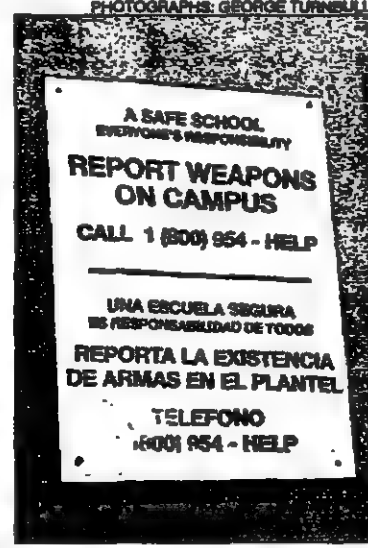
For the first time, clearing opened at the start of July, so students with non-A-level qualifications were able to secure places before the late-August rush.

Though the official clearing lists finish for the year this weekend, it will still be possible to secure a university place right up until term starts. Last-minute vacancies sometimes appear at even the most popular courses when students drop out or alter their start by a year. Ucas encourages students to contact universities directly throughout September and then to fill out a Ucas late-entry form.

Vanessa Bridge, Leeds University's information officer, said: "Places are continually becoming available." Meanwhile, forward-thinking sixth-formers are already applying for 1997 entry. Ucas opened its doors to a new year of university applicants on September 1. The deadline is October 15 for Oxford and Cambridge and December 15 for all other universities.



Rosemary Runcente, Principal of the Los Angeles elementary school, and what you see as you enter the premises



'Teacher's just been shot'

George Turnbull describes the horrific kind of events the authorities have to be ready for in Los Angeles

Armed police arrived 40 seconds after Alfredo Perez, a teacher, was shot through the brain by a stray bullet from the street as he taught 23 youngsters in the library of Figueroa Street Elementary School, Los Angeles. Eighteen minutes later, he was on the operating table as a 30-strong crisis team set about fighting for the school's life.

Psychological aid followed first aid as the realisation dawned on staff and students that a much-loved teacher was dying, minutes after the school had begun its day.

Marlene Wong, Los Angeles Unified School District Mental Health Services director, says: "A routine begins within 15 minutes of any school disaster. Schools are arranged in clusters of 20 for rapid response, and everyone knows what to do. Medics are summoned for first aid or to pronounce death. Relatives are informed and counselled. The media also need to know."

But school closure is not recommended and the next day is planned carefully. The aim is to keep students and parents informed and to present the school as a safe place.

Ms Wong explains: "If students are kept away, fear and insecurity will be reinforced. The room in which the incident happened should be changed. But if someone has died, changed but is kept for a time, with flowers to allow grief to be expressed."

Bitter experience has forced the school district to learn from its mistakes. In 1984, a shooting incident at a school exposed the need for a rapid-response crisis strategy. A girl was killed and other students and teachers were injured by a sniper. "Because he didn't like Mondays," a strategy was developed.

Wesley Mitchell, the Chief of Police for the Los Angeles Unified School

district, says: "This is a nice community, but the parents perceive it as dangerous." But, with property around the school used for drug-dealing and a gang-related shooting that left a teacher's life in ruins, it is difficult to understand her praise for the district.

With bullet-proof glass in the windows now, the school is certainly safer. Police Chief Mitchell considers the community a bigger problem. He believes that it may be 40 years before the development of the kind of community involvement that would help to solve such problems in Los Angeles schools and that, with a 30 per cent increase in the number of young people by 2006, solutions do need to be found soon, so that bitter experience is no longer the teacher.

George Turnbull is editor of Business Matters, published by the Associated Press.

student was excused from her class in the early afternoon, on a day when Carmen Garner, the Principal, was absent. The attack lasted five minutes while the toilet door was left open.

Mrs Garner says, however, that "even the President's safety cannot be guaranteed". (Two attacks were made recently on the White House, one involving a gun, the other a light aircraft.) Yet she considers school premises safe. As she patrols the elementary school she now runs, she says: "When these buildings were put up, safety was not an issue and that makes it difficult. But I could have a police helicopter overhead in minutes, simply by using this two-way radio."

But a 40-second response time was too late to prevent Alfredo Perez losing part of his brain, committing him to painful treatment. The shooting was drug-related. A second shot had entered an upstairs classroom, but no one was hurt.

Rosemary Runcente, the Principal, says: "This is a nice community, but the parents perceive it as dangerous." But, with property around the school used for drug-dealing and a gang-related shooting that left a teacher's life in ruins, it is difficult to understand her praise for the district.

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George Turnbull is editor of Business Matters, published by the Associated Press.

Girls take the lead at the independents

John O'Leary looks closely at the latest breakdown of results from private schools

The headline message from the independent schools' first full breakdown of girls' and boys' examination results is straightforward: the girls are well ahead at GCSE and are establishing a lead at A level. But the more interesting comparisons are to be found within the mixed schools.

Previous analyses have said more about the different types of school than the pupils within them. Comparing the leading mixed schools with their single-sex counterparts can be misleading because of their different selection policies: top schools such as the two St Paul's schools, in west London, attract outstandingly bright children.

The breakdown of results gives the first insight into how pupils who have cleared the same entrance hurdles fare subsequently. In the majority of cases, this means comparing grades in those one-time boys' schools that are now co-educational.

Among the leading mixed schools in *The Times* league tables, there are wide variations in relative performance of boys and girls, some of which buck all the national trends. At King's School, Canterbury, for example, boys' and girls' results were similar at GCSE, but girls did better at A level.

At Sevenoaks School, there is added confusion because the boys did better in the International Baccalaureate but the girls did better at A level. Among the leading mixed schools, only Rugby School produced virtually identical pass rates for both sexes at GCSE and A level.

In most mixed schools, as in the aggregate for all subscribers to the Independent Schools Information Service, girls were well ahead at

GCSE. The gap was narrower at A level, with boys turning the tables in many cases. At Bancroft's School, in Essex, for example, the girls achieved 34 per cent starred A grades at GCSE, compared with the boys' 24 per cent. But at A level the boys were marginally ahead.

Professor Alan Smithers, the head of policy research at Brunel University, said that some of the differences could be explained by girls switching schools for the sixth form. At Westminster School, for example, where the girls' A level results were the best in England, all 40 girls joined after GCSE.

He said: "The results are very interesting and will take some time to analyse fully. But results such as Westminster's show that very able pupils will do well, regardless of whether they are in single-sex or mixed schools."

The results, published yesterday, show girls achieving a higher points score per subject at A level, although boys scored more points overall for university entrance because they took more subjects. Boys took an average of 3.15 A levels to the girls' 3.04.

The GCSE and A-level tables published last month are available through The Times Internet service. They are included in a new education package in the Information Times section. Readers can find it at <http://www.the-times.co.uk>

Immanuel College in Basingstoke, Hampshire, was omitted from the GCSE table published on August 31. Its 51 pupils achieved 40.8 per cent A grades, placing it equal 28th in the table. Vivian County Grammar School for Girls achieved the 35.3 per cent A-grade total attributed to Bebbington High School. The King's School, Chester, is a boys school, and Wellington School, Somerset, is mixed.

BATTLE OF THE SEXES

A-LEVELS	School	Boys				Girls			
		A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Westminster Sch., London		108	8.64	40	8.35				
Severoaks Sch., Sevenoaks, Kent		88	7.88	52	8.20				
King's Sch., Canterbury, Kent		80	7.84	60	8.27				
Udendale Sch., Peterborough, Nthants		167	7.41	42	7.48				
Rugby Sch., Rugby, W Midlands		87	7.74	38	7.77				
King Henry VIII, Coventry, W Midlands		66	7.67	38	7.55				
Columns: A-boys taking exam; B-% of A* passers; C-% of A passers; D-girls taking exam; E-% of A* passers; F-% of all A passers									
GCSE	School	Boys				Girls			
		A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Severoaks Sch., Sevenoaks		51	28.9	68.9	57	28.9	78.1		
Chesham's Sch. of Music, Manchester		12	34.1	65.8	12	28.8	78.0		
Stockport Grammar Sch., Stockport		70	27.1	63.8	73	37.1	71.6		
Udendale Sch., Peterborough		128	25.1	61.8	42	35.6	78.9		
Bancroft's Sch., Woodford Green		48	24.7	70.9	58	34.8	68.5		
Rod House Sch Ltd, Slapton-on-Town		20	32.4	64.5	15	10.8	51.1		

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POSTS

The Francis Holland (Church of England) Schools Trust
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Required for September 1997

HEAD

for
The Francis Holland School,
Graham Terrace, London SW1
(in membership of the Girls' Schools Association)
on the retirement of Mrs. Jennifer Anderson after 15 years distinguished service.

Details of the post can be obtained from the secretary of the trust at the above address or telephone 0171 730 8359. Applications to be submitted not later than 1st October 1996.

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For further details and an application form, please contact Personnel Services, University of East London, Romford Road, London E15 4LZ. Tel: 0181 590 7722 ext. 4321 (answerphone). Please quote the relevant reference number. Closing date for completed applications 27th September 1996.

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POSTS

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Once he was out, Cork's injury was X-rayed and a hairline fracture of the left humerus revealed, along with severe bruising to the shoulder. His arm is immobile and he is unlikely to regain much movement before the conclusion of this match. Derbyshire had planned to field a five-man seam attack, but Dean, the left-armers, dislocated a finger in shielding practice and, by necessity, this place was given to Gul Khan, a batsman. Four bowlers should have been enough; three might yet be. If Malcolm and Harris bowl anything like Defreitas did yesterday.

CANTERBURY (first day of four; Kent won toss): Kent have scored 376 for four wickets against Hampshire

KENT may be the outsiders of the five counties left in the race for the championship, but the white horse is still going to give the rest of them a run for their money judging by the way that they laid the foundation for victory over Hampshire.

Stroke-play was never going to be easy on a sluggish pitch, but Hooper, losing the pain of a dashed early triumph which is slowly losing its nail, showed what was possible with an innings of the highest class, and Ward, Long, and Ealham took their cue from him.

Walker had already given Kent a brisk start with 30 out of the first 37 when Hooper went in to make the shivering spectators forget the autumnal chill by scoring 84 off 83 balls. His throbbing dig once persuaded him to withdraw the bottom hand, but he still contrived to hit two sixes and 14 fours.

Ward, Hooper's partner in a third-wicket partnership of 137 in only 112 minutes, completed 1,000 championship runs for the season on his way to 79, including a six and ten fours, and Ealham, who has been significant performances in an unbeaten fifth-wicket stand of 127.

J.M., who sat into the side

Table tennis: Grove, the Shropshire club that became one of the most successful in the history of the British game, has collapsed (Richard Eaton writes).

Unbeaten for five years in the British League until this season, and four times European Cup semi-finalists, Grove is about to withdraw from the British League and has already done so from the European Cup because of financial pressures. On Sunday its two leading players — Steve Ward, the Welsh champion, and Chris Oldfield, the England international — retired in play.

Between them, they took Kent towards what looks like a formidable total considering that the pitch is expected to get quicker and their attack is much more potent than Hampshire's. The fact that Mascarenhas, at 19, playing in only his second game and doing well to add two more wickets to the nine that he took on his debut, was their best bowler, tells its own story.

□ Mark Taylor and Shane Warne, both doubtful because of injury, were named in the Australia party for the tour of India next month.

AUSTRALIA PARTY: M A Taylor (captain), I H Horne, S B George, D A Lee, M A Warning, J N Gillespie, B J Hogg, S G Law, S J ...

COLOMBO (second day of five): Zimbabwe, with four first-innings wickets in hand, are 244 runs behind Sri Lanka

(bats to 1, to 10)
 (5 white, 108 overs) 289
 J Turner, J D Kerr, A Coddick and K J
 to bat
 ALL OF WICKETS: 1-35, 2-42, 3-77, 4-
 77, 5-283
 OWNING Fraser 21-4-67.1; Johnson 19-
 59.1; Hewitt 17-4-65.1; Tunnell 36-16-75-
 100
 WICKETS 11-2-20.0; Duch 2-1-1-1
 Middlesex P N Wootes, J C Pooley,
 R Ramprakash, "M W Gifford, O A
 Ash, K R Brown, K P Duch, J P Hewitt,
 L Johnson, P C R Tunnell, A R C
 Wootes.
 Scores points: Middlesex 2 Somerset 2
 umpires H D Bird and K J Lyons

[illegible]

J. C. Cooray (Sri Lanka)

-Is slow progress on pilgrimage to Brentford

We arrived late at the ground and they had run out of programmes; this mattered hardly at all: programmes are for the identification of teams and players. Plymouth Argyle play in green, the only team in the English league whose first-choice kit is green, so we knew for whom to cheer on the field. Plymouth, also who were our allies on the terraces.

Griffin Park, where Brentford play football, is easier to see than to find. Drive west on the M4 and it is in your left, brightly lit; take the road off the motorway and you enter a land of one-way streets with speed humps; each turn you take leads into a housing estate from which you exit in reverse.

We made it. Only one gate remained open and the man said: "£8 each, £5 for children and pensioners. If you want to sit." No discount for late arrival. We negotiated a price, he gave us the money in a bag, took another look at us, decided we could come up with another five. We came up with another five.

"What's the score?"
"One-all, we should be well in the lead."

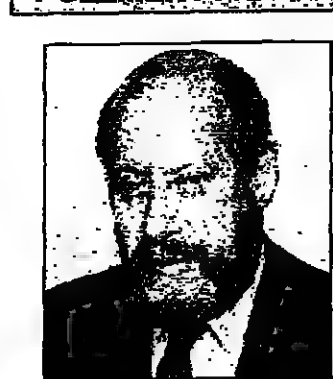
"Who is, 'we'?" But he had gone. It was a game of two halves: we saw only the second half. We walked to the West Stand, which is for away supporters, behind locked gates as in a low-security prison; the gatekeeper charged us £10 to get in, which he accepted as if he could only just manage it at the price, instead of welcoming the unexpected bounty.

The ground was less than half full and where we sat, behind the Brentford goal which we hoped was to be the scene of action, an elderly man with a fur hat moved crabwise along the row in front of us shouting into a mobile telephone in Yiddish. He smoked a short, thick, wet, malodorous cigar.

The football was less skilful than you would expect for the money. Long, high kicks, a great deal of time wasting, much inaccurate passing and it was noticeable that, when it came to "support" it was we who provided it. We cheered when we were awarded a throw-in; the red and white-scarved locals kept an almost sullen silence until their men scored goals. We briefly minded having no programme, wanting to look up the

'They seemed to play better with ten men'

CLEMENT FREUD



on Friday

referee's place of origin: he seemed to come from very nearby. Plymouth, where we have supported since watching our first professional game there in short trousers, have a few problems. Dan McCauley, the chairman, announced that he was trying to sell the club, then said that perhaps he would not. Mr Warnock, our manager, who took us to Wembley and glorious success last season (which is why we now play in the second division) is

thinking of leaving, the way managers do, and Grobbelaar, our extrovert goalkeeper, has complications of his own in the courts, next January.

In the light of this, we performed with valour. Brentford scored a second goal midway through the half, a goal that looked offside to us, but the home team's jubilation was such that it would have taken a graver man than the referee to have denied it. Then, one of our men got sent off the home team's forward latched on to a long pass and was making for goal when our defender tackled him from behind, sadly missing the ball.

The Pilgrims actually seemed to play better with ten men: fast, accurate, crisp football culminating in a sensationally brilliant move: Grobbelaar clearance, precision pass to the left wing, impeccable cross and a superb shot into the back of the net. Two-all.

We were still standing and cheering and punching the air — only partly to clear it from the seriously evil cigar smoke — when Brentford scored again to make it 3-2. A good enough goal, we supposed, looking expectantly at the referee lest he

might finally give us a break; he pointed to the centre circle. "He would," said a green-scarved man sitting behind us. "Being local, like."

In The Beehive in Brentford High Street after the game, the consensus was that the team's heart was back. We were playing better than we had for the past few games. Pilgrims' fans have a reputation for good behaviour, which cynics maintain is because we behave badly only when we win, and we never win.

For half an hour, we went through the salient points of the match and then, because there were in that pub a dozen Hun-

garians who support Ferencváros and were keen to shout for any other team that wears green shirts, we took it in turns to take deep gulps from their huge bottle of over-proof plum brandy. Though we did not have too many words of each other's language, we began a darts match with arrows aimed at the treble-top, finishing with both sides trying to hit the board from 12 metres, unleashing the darts between our legs. At kicking-out time, not too many of us remembered the exact score, or much else.

'The referee seemed to be from nearby'

RUGBY UNION

Bath scale heights in pursuit of excellence

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ALL sport, it might be said, is to the art of the possible. On Wednesday, Bath showed with overwhelming clarity the potential of rugby union for self-expression, for entertainment, for the discipline that could help to raise the game in Great Britain to new heights. Tomorrow, though, will they do it against Wasps, when there are two league points on the line.

"I'm not going to compromise," Brian Ashton, the Bath coach, said after watching his side score 13 tries, and 87 points, against a Swansea XV stuffed full of first-class experience. "It's very easy to go back and play a limited game, but that would betray everything we have worked for."

It is far too simplistic to suggest that the presence of two great rugby league players made the difference, though part of the attraction at the Recreation Ground tomorrow will be the sight of Henry Paul playing opposite Va'aiga

were a lot of mistakes. There is a lot more work to be done. The key to Bath's achievement is the approach of their home-grown players, which allowed the manifold talents of Paul and Robinson to flourish in front of, among others, Jack Rowell, the England coach.

Both men have fitted in comfortably with a group which, though still amateur until this season, has enjoyed a professional outlook for years. "We have had great support from the Bath players," Paul said. "Phil de Glanville was like a rabbit, chattering in my ear the whole time against Swansea, and Jerry Guscott was the same in training."

Paul and Robinson acknowledged that they had been caught out by the pace of the first half, in which Bath's movement of the ball was without parallel in my experience. During that first 40 minutes, there were only five lineouts and, throughout the match, the ball was in play for 35 minutes, compared with 28 when Bath lost to Leicester in the league last weekend.

What such a game can do for the attitude, as footballers, of props such as John Mallen or Nathan Thomas, the young Welsh flanker, can only be imagined. It is utterly laughable that anyone could conceive of the sport's confused political state preventing Bath from taking their total rugby on to a European stage. Bath have looked at the law changes, have considered the southern hemisphere's Super 12 tournament, and have learnt from their experience against Wigan in the cross-code matches last May.

Knitting it together produced the 13-try explosion on Wednesday. "We have to get the basic principles right of continuity, width and pace," Ashton said. "There's nothing fancy about it, though when you have guys like Paul, who can throw the ball from one side of the pitch to the other, it is difficult to defend against."

This is the way we have to play the game. I realise also there is a responsibility to entertain the public, particularly since we are now asking them to pay so much to watch rugby. We will play in games where we need a lot more balance because sides will try to close us down, so we will have to hold the ball and drive it; but the vision of the side was remarkable and we played at a pace and a level I have not seen from Bath before. And there is more to come.



Paul touches down for one of Bath's 13 tries against Swansea, a performance that broadened the sport's horizons

English clubs make running

W

Asps must be feeling somewhat disgruntled this week. Looking down the list of nine Anglo-Welsh fixtures completed by Wednesday evening, they find that they are the only ones from England to have lost. The English clubs accumulated 376 points to the 176 points of their Welsh counterparts and scored 51 tries against 19. This is an impressive set of statistics that will bring a warm ring of confidence to the inhabitants of Twickenham's technical department and a whimpering cry for the comfort blanket at the Arms Park.

That the traditional connection has been revived after a decade's absence has to be welcomed. Though these are early days, the discrepancy between the scores may very well indicate that what the England team has managed to accomplish during this period is in fact a true reflection of the strength of English club activity.

Yet it has to be asked: What kind of competition is it? And it has to be admitted: Not much of one. Before anyone raises a pen to condemn this as dismissive whingeing from the side of the border that has been on the receiving end of these canings, let us look at the detail. This has been a club-inspired competition. The participants have simply been divided into four groups of six with no method dictating the groupings. Confirmation that the matches were to take place came only last week: no comprehensive list of fixtures

represented in Europe next season. Since we are not in the Heineken (European) Cup this season, it has to be my priority for next year.

He is not a man to make excuses, though. "There is a huge gulf between what Bath can achieve and what I can achieve at Swansea," he said. "They are operating at a different level to us. They are a fully professional outfit with their players able to train when they want to during the day and to rest when they please. That's the game's future."

"But I'm still operating, by and large, under the philosophy of the old system. Every one of my players, although under contract and is paid, still has a job to go to during the day. We train when the squad is available, two or three evenings a week."

Ruddock added: "The Anglo-Welsh competition is very important. It will grow, but the system needs to be thought out better. I don't think, for example, that Wasps or Leicester should have to travel so far in mid-week or Welsh clubs should make the return journey into England at that time. They would be better played, surely, at the weekend."

Evidence accumulates weekly of muddled or hurried thinking. Until English and Welsh administrators sit down and look at the fixtures overall, they are in danger of simply growing without shape and with no sense of proper focus and climax. Quality of competition is the key, not quantity.

Or, more precisely, what does a player's contract, which may have a clause stipulating his release for his national team, state about his selection for the Lions? This and other matters will be discussed next week between representatives of the English and Welsh unions.

How meaningful, though, have these games been? Have they reflected the respective strengths and weaknesses of the clubs either side of the border? How significant is the competition this season?

Neath, Pontypridd and Swansea did not by a long way, play their full teams. Hard cheese, you may say; but they reason, because of the uncertain status of the competition, Welsh clubs, for the moment, value their domestic competition more. This is the declared route into Europe. They know what it stands for.

Mike Ruddock, the director of coaching at Swansea, who lost 87-15 to Bath on Wednesday, said: "We played three games last week and won them all. The next week we have Dunsford, Pontypridd and Llanelli. That's a tough schedule and I want all my players available. My aim is the top four in the Welsh league so that my club is

Scots poised to move

THE deteriorating relations between Scottish First Division Rugby and the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU) are set to worsen with the news that representatives from English Professional Rugby Union Clubs (Epruc) are to meet the leading 20 Scottish clubs in Edinburgh on Sunday (Mark Souster writes).

It is expected that Epruc will offer its version of the future for domestic rugby, which is likely to include a British/

European league, into which Scotland's clubs could be invited.

Having become increasingly frustrated by what they believe is the SRU's intransigence over funds from Europe, player contracts and proposals for the 1996-97 fixture list, which were unanimously rejected on Wednesday, the Scottish clubs believe that they have little to lose by throwing in their lot with their English counterparts.

RADIO CHOICE

A hoot of a myth nailed

A Cry in the Dark. Radio 4, 11.45pm. Last Friday night, deep inside an Amazon forest after dark, Joanna Pincock turned pale as a wildlife expert described to her the bloodiest rituals of the vampire bat. I could not work how, by torchlight, he knew that his companion had changed colour. A relatively mild horror awaits Pincock tonight as she ventures deep inside an English wood with Simon King, another wildlife specialist. A hedgehog screams out in distress, the inference being that a badger has decided to risk a mouthful of spines and have a late-night snack. The hoot of a tawny owl prompts King to nail the myth, famously circulated by Shakespeare, that owls go "too-wit too-woo". The sound engineer's biggest coup is to record the footfalls of a badger.

Over the Counter. Radio 4, 12.25pm. As the old song says, there's an awful lot of coffee in Brazil. There's an awful lot in Duke Street, London, WI, too. Run by brother and sister Tony and Audrey Higgins and Tony's son, David, their shop sells 30 different kinds of coffee, mostly unblended because that is what customers prefer. Tony Higgins offers this musical analogy: the whole orchestra. If Oliver Watson, the interviewer, wished to be a clever Dick, he would have said that Tony Higgins's analogy could not be right because more people prefer an orchestra to, say, an unaccompanied violin.

Peter Davalle

RADIO 1	WORLD SERVICE
FM Stereo, 6.30am Chris Evans 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Lisa (Aston) 2.00 News Complete 4.00 Mark Goodier 5.00 Drive-in and 6.30 The Max 7.30 Essential Selection 10.00 One in the Jungle 12.00 Last in the Line 1.00 Anne Nightingale 5.00 Charlie Jordan	All times in BST. News on the Hour 5.30 Europe Today 5.45 Folk Routes 6.30 Europe 6.45 Gung Solo 6.50 Insider's Guide 7.15 World Today 7.30 Rock Salad 8.15 On the Shelf 8.30 The Night (10.00) 8.30 The Way of the Buddha German 9.15 Music Review 9.45 Soundbyte 10.05 Business 10.15 Focus on Faith 10.45 Sport 11.30 BBC English 11.45 On the Shelf 12.30pm Meridian 1.15 Britain Today 1.30 Science in Action 3.05 Outlook 3.30 Multitrack 4.05 Sport 4.15 BBC English 4.30 News in German 5.30 Business Report 5.45 Britain Today 6.10 World Today 6.25 Spotlight 6.30 News in German 7.30 Focus on Faith 9.01 Outlook 9.25 Words of Faith 9.30 Multitrack 10.05 Business 10.15 Britain Today 10.30 People and Politics 11.30 World Today 11.45 Sport 12.10 Spotlight 12.15 Insider's Guide 12.25 Book Choice 12.30 Multitrack 1.30 Seven Days 1.45 Britain Today 2.30 Outlook 3.05 Words of Faith 3.30 Meridian 4.15 Sport 4.30 Village Chart Show

RADIO 2	RADIO 5 LIVE
FM Stereo, 6.00am Martin Koller, incl 6.15 Pause for Thought 7.30 Sarah Kennedy 8.30 Ken Bruce 11.30 Jimmy Young 1.30pm Debbie Thorne 3.00 Ed Stewart 5.05 John Dunn 7.00 Mad about Musicals. Paul Nicholas hosts the quiz for amateur musical associations 7.30 Friday Night is Music Night From the Hippodrome in Gollers Green, with the BBC Concert Orchestra 8.45 Every Living Thing 9.00 Listen to the Radio 10.00 George Maly. A Birthday Celebration Radio 2 Arts Programme 12.00am Charles Nova	6.00am Morning Reports, incl 6.45 Wake Up to Money 6.00 The Breakfast Programme 6.55 The Magazine, with Brian Hayes 12.00 Midday with Mel 2.05 Musicos on Five 4.00 Nationwide 7.00 Newsline 7.30 Parkinson 8.00 Sport 8.30 Friday Sport, with Robin Bailey. Football Commentary on a Division One game plus golf, cricket and the rest of the BBC 10.00 Paper Talk, with Jay Byrnes and Brian Alexander 11.00 Night Bites, with David McNeill 12.00am After Hours 2.00 Up All Night, with Richard Daltyn

TALK RADIO	CLASSIC FM
6.30am Paul Ross 10.00 Scott Chisholm 1.00pm Andrew Robson 3.30pm Tommy Boyd 6.00 Peter Dinkley 7.00 Sport 10.00 Mike Allen 1.00pm Mike Dickinson	4.00am Mark Griffiths 6.00 Breakfast Show 9.00 Henry Kelly 12.00 Susanah Simons 2.00pm Lunchtime Concerto Poulenc (Concerto for two pianos in D minor) 3.00pm Jamie Cullum 6.00pm Newsnight 6.30pm Sorolla. New release 7.00pm Classic Showcases 6.00pm Evening Concert. Street Symphony in C; Debussy (Lullaby) Debussy (On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring); Faure (Requiem); 40/10.00 Michael Mappin, including at 11.00pm Friday Live 1.00am Sally Patterson

VIRGIN RADIO	RADIO 3
6.00am Rise 'n' Shine 8.00 Richard Skinner 12.00 Graham Dene 4.00pm Night Rhythms 7.45 Paul Coppe (FM) (AM) Robin Barrie 10.00 Alan Freeman 12.00pm Janey Lee Grace 2.00pm Howard Pearce	6.00am On Air. Includes Mozart, Schubert, Weber, Brahms, Reger and Strauss 8.00 Morning Collection. Handel, Liszt, Bartok and Faure 10.00 Musical Encounters. Francesco Saverio (Sinfonia in B flat, La Tempesta di mare); Aron (Les set joys, Libre vermell); Jongs (Scherzetto, Op 108); Beethoven (Piano Concerto in D, arr from Violin Concerto); Dohnanyi (Sextet) 2.00 Preoccupations. The cellist Robert Cohen talking about a subject which is close to his heart 2.05 Dvorak (Rondo in G minor, Op 94) Robert Cohen, cello. 2.15 Music Restored. Presented by George Pratt

RADIO 4	CLASSIC FM
5.55am Shipping (LW only) 6.00 News Briefing 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Prayer for the Day 6.30 Today and 7.25, 8.25 Sport 8.45 Thought for the Day 8.40 P.G. Wodehouse's Golf Stories: Rodney Has a Haircut 8.58 Wodehouse 9.00 News 9.05 Desert Island Discs (i) 9.45 Gerry's Bar. The first of our casual encounters with life in Northern Ireland and beyond by Gerry Anderson 10.00 News. Witnessing History (FM). John Florence talks to people who were present at the premiere of Brian's War Requiem 10.10 An Act of Worship (LW) 10.15 On This Day (LW) 10.30 Woman's Hour 11.30 The Natural History Programme 12.00 News; You and Yours 12.25pm Over the Counter. See Choice 12.55 Weather 1.00 The World at One 1.40 The Archers (i) 1.55 Shipping Forecast 2.00 News: The Classic Serial; Tony and Son (2/5) (i) 3.00 News: The Afternoon Shift 4.00 News 4.05 Kaleidoscope. First reactions to the opening concert at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester 4.48 Short Story: Constant	3.00 Mining the Archives. Recordings from Edith Vogel's career, includes Schumann (Allegro in B minor, Op 6; Davidsbühl Variations, Op 6); Brahms (Two Ballades, Op 10 Nos 1 and 2); Schubert (Variations in A flat for piano duo) 5.00 Music Machine. (Sinfonia in D); Liszt (Tarentelle de bravoure sur des themes de la Muette de Portici); Bernstein (Three Dances Episodes, On the Town) 6.45 BBC Proms 1996 (With BBC2). Bruckner (Prelude and Fugue in C minor; Locusts; Op 8); Brahms (Two Ballades, Op 10 Nos 1 and 2); Schubert (Variations in A flat for piano duo) 8.00 Music Machine. (Sinfonia in D); Liszt (Tarentelle de bravoure sur des themes de la Muette de Portici); Bernstein (Three Dances Episodes, On the Town) 8.45 BBC Proms 1996 (With BBC2). Bruckner (Prelude and Fugue in C minor; Locusts; Op 8); Brahms (Two Ballades, Op 10 Nos 1 and 2); Schubert (Variations in A flat for piano duo) 8.00 Music Machine. 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Saddam's defiance of the West strikes sympathetic chord in Arab hearts

By Christopher Walker
MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT

MIDDLE EAST

SUPPORTERS and opponents of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq were last night both predicting a further revival of the dictator's standing in the Arab world in the event of the "disproportionate" new air and missile strikes threatened by the United States.

Any such attacks by Stealth fighters re-based in Kuwait and cruise missiles will prompt further divisions in the 22-member Arab

League, whose foreign ministers' meeting opens in Cairo today. The league, split since the 1991 Gulf War, has condemned earlier American attacks on targets inside what is described as the sovereign territory of a member state.

Even before the latest American moves, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Washington's two main Arab allies, had spoken out, the Egyptian Cabinet ruling out any "interfer-

ence in Iraq's internal affairs" and Saudi Arabia announcing publicly that it would not have allowed its territory to launch missile attacks against Iraq.

Jordan, which has reversed the previously sympathetic stand towards Saddam adopted after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, is under pressure from opposition deputies in the Amman parliament, to change tack again in view of the latest American attacks. Embarrassed by Washington reports that the Hashemite kingdom had assisted

in the abortive CIA plot to oust Saddam, Marwan Muasher, the Information Minister, said: "We do not plan to interfere in any attempt to topple the regime of Saddam Hussein. We feel this is up to the Iraqi people."

While regard for Arab sovereignty was the official explanation put forward by many former Arab members of the 1991 anti-Iraq coalition for changing their stance, senior Arab diplomats said the real reason was what one envoy described as "a correct gut assess-

ment of how the Arab street is looking upon this crisis".

Aside from Kuwait, where many citizens have brutal first-hand experience of the ruthless torture, rape and pillage meted out by Saddam's troops and most families keep a four-wheel drive vehicle in the garage in case they have to flee again across the desert to Saudi Arabia, there is a remarkable well of sympathy towards Saddam among ordinary Arabs. "We see him as the one Arab leader who has been true to himself, who has

not sold out to the West," said a Palestinian greengrocer in Israeli-occupied east Jerusalem.

Even in the oil-rich Gulf States most threatened by Saddam's incurable expansionism, there have been significant changes in mood since the Gulf War. "The US has tried to increase its influence by making Saddam a bogeyman," one analyst said. "The American influence among client states in the Gulf who think the US Fifth Cavalry will come to their rescue has created an environment of paranoia concern-

ing Saddam. But the ordinary man takes all this with a pinch of salt."

While at the level of the coffee shop there is a gut admiration for a fellow Arab's continued reckless willingness to snub his nose at the world's most powerful state, in many of the glittering palaces of the rulers there is fear of Iran, regarded as a more dangerous threat. Even in Israel, where policy considerations are governed by the prospect of Iran obtaining a nuclear capability, Iraq is seen as the lesser of two evils.

Republicans snipe at handling of crisis by Clinton

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

BIPARTISAN support for President Clinton's handling of the Iraq crisis unraveled yesterday as a string of top Republicans accused him of ineffectiveness, lacking clear objectives and fracturing the allied Gulf War coalition.

With US forces preparing to launch a new and heavier round of airstrikes against Iraqi targets, the White House accused Republicans of encouraging President Saddam Hussein through their failure to back the Administration at a time of crisis. Mike McCurry, the press secretary, said politics had traditionally stopped at the water's edge and should do so now.

Bob Dole himself remained silent, partly from fear of undermining the US military but also because he knows the Administration would love to dredge up his past courting of Saddam. Eager to sell Iraq more Kansas wheat, Mr Dole was one of five senators who met Saddam in Baghdad just weeks before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and assured him the US wanted better ties.

With less than eight weeks left to the presidential election, Mr Dole's surrogates showed no such restraint, arguing Mr Clinton should have hit Saddam far harder at the outset after securing allied support.

Jack Kemp, Mr Dole's running-mate, accused Mr Clinton of emboldening Saddam through his "vacillation" and "failure to define our objectives and tell the American people how he intends to carry

out those objectives". Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, said America looked like an "isolated bully using sophisticated weapons to no purpose... arrogant and impotent".

Senator John McCain, Mr Dole's senior foreign policy adviser, called Mr Clinton's initial foray an "abject failure" and observed: "If this Administration calls [the first strikes] a success... I just hope we

6 If the first strike was a success, I just hope we don't have another success

don't have another success." James Baker, President Bush's Secretary of State during the Gulf War, said Saddam only understood "overwhelming force" and lamented the President's "failure of leadership... the coalition we built up painstakingly... it's gone."

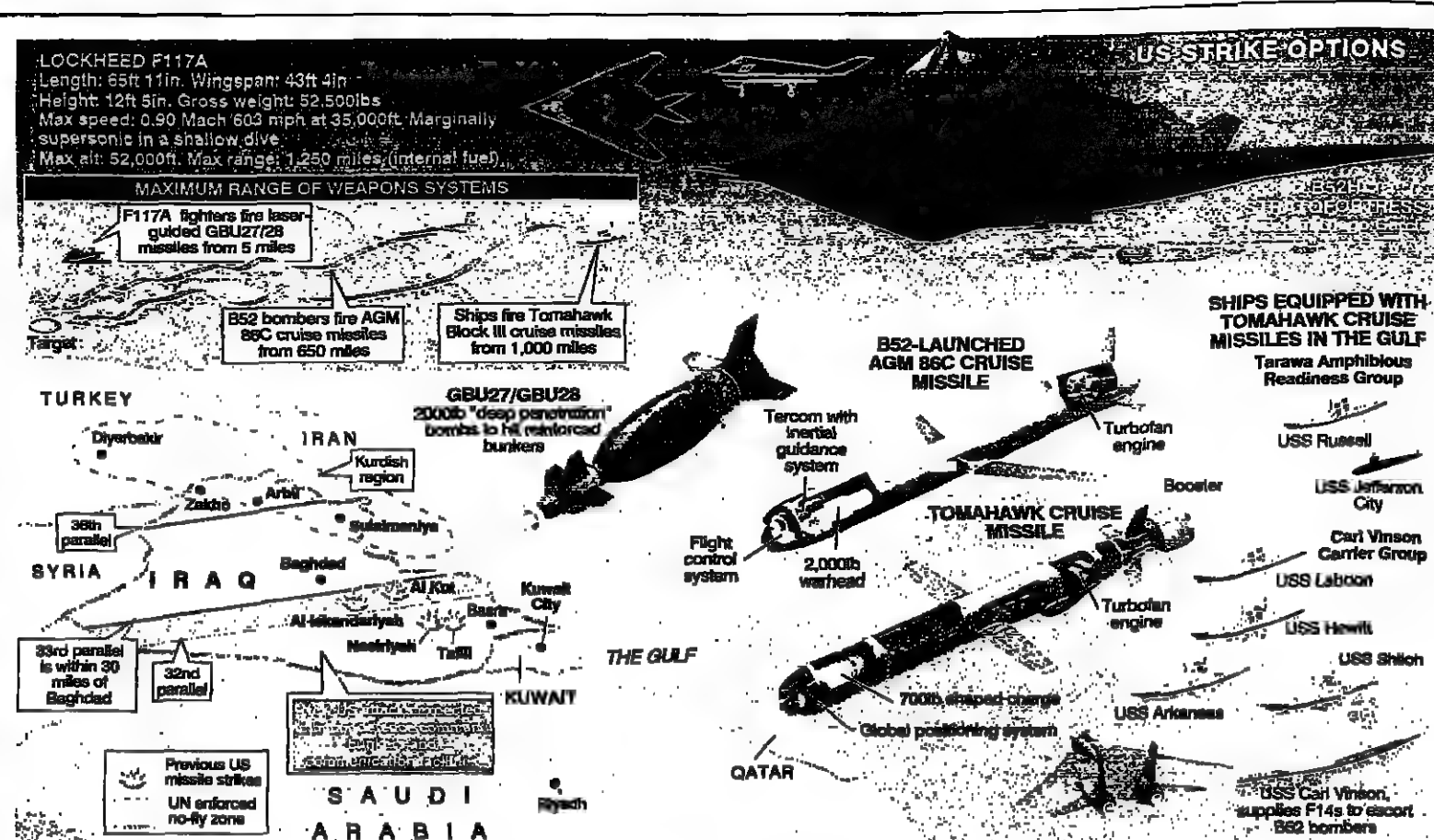
Senator Richard Lugar demanded "a very extensive series of raids that would hobble any air power, air defences, communications and intelligence... I would not put Baghdad off-limits."

Mr Clinton had hoped that one quick slap on Saddam's wrist would put the Iraqi dictator back in his Baghdad box — at least for the final weeks of the election.

In fact, Saddam has regained control of what was supposed to be a Kurdish safe area, divided the coalition and wrecked a CIA campaign to overthrow him. Iraqi forces are defiantly rebuilding the air defence facilities destroyed in those first missile attacks, and taking pot shots at US warplanes patrolling an expanded southern no-fly zone that Saddam refuses to recognise.

The Administration rightly claims to have curtailed Saddam's ability to threaten Kuwait and Saudi Arabia by expanding that no-fly zone, and justifiably blames Kurdish feuding for the collapse of their safe area. But the fact remains that Mr Clinton finds himself caught in a messy military entanglement that he cannot win without a huge escalation and all the electoral risks that would entail.

Saddam can absorb extensive damage from aerial attacks, and he knows Mr Clinton would not dare deploy US ground troops. Some analysts argue that Saddam welcomes such attacks, believing they will further divide the allies and enhance his prestige at home. They also present him with a chance to shoot down US pilots — Mr Clinton's ultimate pre-election nightmare.



Americans deploy Stealth fighter force

By Michael Evans
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

AMERICAN strike aircraft known as "silver bullets" were on their way to Kuwait from the United States last night, ready for action against Iraq with a payload of weapons capable of penetrating President Saddam Hussein's underground command bunkers.

Eight F117A Stealth fighters, officially codenamed Nighthawk by the US Air Force, will arrive in the Gulf region today after flying non-stop, with mid-air refuelling, from Holloman air force base in New Mexico. They will be based in Kuwait from where they are expected to launch the first phase of new attacks

on Iraqi targets. The arrival of the Stealth fighters will provide the Americans with a wider range of target options because of the aircraft's weapons systems and its ability to fly undetected through enemy radar.

The Stealth fighter, whose combat debut during the 1991 Gulf War was the first demonstration of a new generation of futuristic aircraft developed in one of America's super-secret "black" programmes, is armed with four laser-guided bombs capable of doing more lasting damage to Saddam's heavily reinforced command network than the air-launched or sea-launched cruise missile. Cruise

missiles were used in last week's American attacks because the targets were above-surface air defence radar and surface-to-air missile sites. The objective was to damage Saddam's ability to threaten American-led coalition aircraft on patrols over southern Iraq. With the deployment of F117A Stealth fighters, the intention is clearly to inflict more comprehensive damage on Saddam's military infrastructure.

The Stealth fighter is armed with two types of bomb, the GBU27 and GBU28, both derivatives of the laser-guided Paveway III weapon system but with a deep penetration warhead.

The GBU27 (guided bomb unit) weighs more than 2,260lb and has a warhead containing 528lb of high

explosive. The GBU28 weighs more than 4,680lb, with a warhead of 673lb of high explosive. Both free-fall bombs, as opposed to powered missiles, the GBU weapons have a range of three to six miles and are guided to their target by a laser system.

Since the Gulf War the Americans have been trying to improve a special delayed fuse for the bombs that enables them to penetrate deeply before exploding. One of the drawbacks for the GBU bombs in the Gulf War, according to Duncan Lennox, editor of *Jane's Air-Launched Weapons*, was that Saddam's bunkers are normally several storeys deep and the American devices often went off prematurely as they breached the first or second layer.

Wary emirate puts troops on high alert

FROM MICHAEL DYNES
IN KUWAIT CITY

KUWAIT'S armed forces were put on a state of high alert yesterday after Iraq accused the tiny Gulf state of committing an "act of war" by allowing American Stealth fighters on its soil.

Eight F117 Stealth planes, equipped with 2,000lb laser-guided bombs, are due to arrive in Kuwait today.

The escalation in friction between Washington and Baghdad was triggered on Wednesday by Iraq firing a surface-to-air missile at two US warplanes patrolling the northern no-fly zone over Iraq. Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, accused Ku-

wait of committing an act of war by allowing US planes on its territory, and said that Iraq regarded Kuwait's decision as a "flagrant aggression against Iraq and an act of war against the Iraqi state".

Convinced that a US military strike against Iraq air defence installations is imminent, Kuwait's Supreme Defence Council met in emergency session yesterday. Senior ministers from the defence, foreign affairs and interior ministries, along with members of the armed forces, attended the meeting. Other ministers were caught off guard on holiday or at the

beach. The Supreme Defence Council discussed "plans and preparations in all sectors of the military", as well as Kuwait's "political contacts with friendly states", an official statement said.

Crown Prince Sheikh Saad al-Abdullah al-Sabah, who chaired the meeting, said that he had urged those present to "stay alert" and to take all precautions "to guarantee the security of the state". Kuwait radio said, Kuwait, which has defence agreements with America and the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council, is the only Gulf state to express sympathy with recent US military action in Iraq. Last week, American forces launched 44

Tomahawk and airborne Cruise missiles at Iraqi air defence targets in two raids on southern Iraq for its role in factional Kurdish infighting in the north.

Saudi Arabia, America's key Middle East ally, has refused to sanction the US raids. Prince Sultan, the Saudi Defence Minister, said yesterday that the US had not requested the use of Saudi bases. "If it was requested, we would have rejected it," he added.

Although the Gulf War is still in Kuwaiti minds, they are less fearful today. "Saddam is less of a threat now he can't use his air force," one Kuwaiti said. "He wouldn't dare try it again."

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barzani gambles on more US help

FROM ANDREW FINKEL
IN SALAHUDDIN

KURDISH leaders in northern Iraq asked for Western tolerance yesterday as they tried to carry off their gamble of co-operating with President Saddam Hussein.

Advisers to Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, admitted, however, that their previously warm relations with the United States had cooled after they enlisted Saddam's support to drive a rival faction from the city of

KURDS

Arbil nearly two weeks ago. The KDP has expelled the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan from its last stronghold in Sulaimaniya and the PUK leadership is reported to have taken refuge inside Iran.

Many believe that the Kurds' internecine struggle has fatally undermined the allies' Operation Provide Comfort, which until recently deterred Saddam from reasserting his authority in the Kurdish north of Iraq. In addition to providing security for the Kurds, the operation acted as an umbrella for

voluntary organisations. The city of Sulaimaniya was reported to be calm yesterday as many refugees thought better of a panic decision to flee towards the Iranian border when they learnt that Iraqi troops were not accompanying the victorious KDP into the city. Yet beneath this calm is the real fear that the Iraqis will be back.

Mr Barzani said yesterday that he would not implement a one-party regime and that he believed in "democracy and pluralism". On the other hand, the Kurdish parliament recently voted to extend its life by 21 months and the KDP is unlikely to seek a new mandate before then.

It was up to America to decide whether it wanted to

change its strategy of helping the Kurds, Mr Barzani said in an interview with *The Times* yesterday. The KDP is anxious that the Western allies should continue to act as a military deterrent and prevent Baghdad from trying to collect an immediate reward for Iraqi help.

Mr Barzani asked yesterday for continued protection not just against Saddam "but against all regional powers" — a clear reference to Iran and Turkey, countries which in the past launched military operations into Iraq. It was a recent alliance between the PUK and Iran which is said to have prompted the KDP's invitation to Baghdad in the first place.

Mr Barzani said that "all

instruments" of the United States continued to be welcome in Iraqi Kurdistan — including the CIA.

This was a reference to reports that Washington was planning to evacuate some 200 members of the rebel Iraqi National Congress who were under an American-financed operation plotting resistance to Baghdad. The KDP said it would do everything it could to see those people to the Turkish border, but denied that they were in any danger.

Mr Barzani denied as well reports of a growing friendship with Saddam, although many believe the KDP would leap at some guarantee of autonomy within a federated Iraq.



An Iraqi armoured personnel carrier digs in near Qosh Tapa, just south of Arbil

THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE POPE AND THE CIA

"One of the greatest secret alliances of all time... How the Americans persuaded John Paul II that he could help them topple the Soviet evil empire... Bernstein, the Watergate reporter, reveals an astonishing story"

HEMINGWAY HELL

Margaux was a successful model. She was also a Hemingway. Her mysterious death prompted an unsavoury scramble among her "close friends"

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Under attack from every quarter

Robert Runcie: the final part of *The Times* serialisation of the Humphrey Carpenter biography

The overwhelming impression of Robert Runcie's archbishopric, apart from its first Archbishop of Canterbury to visit China — at a time when the Chinese Church was struggling to find a new identity in a country that was beginning to emerge from the Marxist grip.

After sneering at the foreign trips, Wilson cited Runcie's shifting attitude to the ordination of women. He accused him of a "slithery absence of principle", giving as another example his statements on marriage. According to Wilson, in 1981 he had praised the engagement of the Prince and Princess of Wales as an example of "the respect in which the Royal Family", but two years later "he appears to be advocating divorce". This referred to Runcie's support for the General Synod's proposals to permit the remarriage of certain divorced people in church.

Runcie explains: "I spent a great deal of time in many speeches and writings during the 1970s, on the possibility of holding firm to the principle of lifelong union — and at the same time believing that exceptions should have special treatment. The Catholic and Orthodox churches have dealt with this matter, the one by the concept of the death of a marriage, the other by ex-



During his time at Lambeth the Archbishop became a regular focus of criticism from the right-wing tabloid press

tended nullity, but we had refused to do either. An important principle of moral theology was at stake."

The summer of 1984 saw David Jenkins's election as Bishop of Durham, despite widespread protests from conservative Anglicans about his

modernist interpretation of the Resurrection and the virgin birth. He was consecrated at York Minster on July 6. Two days later the minister was struck by lightning and seriously damaged. John Habgood, Archbishop of York, said that it was "medieval" to

regard this as a sign of divine disapproval. Runcie said that God was "on the side of the men who fought the blaze". In September, Britain's coalminers went on strike, and Runcie's first public pronouncement on the dispute was critical of the strikers. In a sermon at Derby Cathedral: "I have watched with dismay how some have taken law into their own hands and unleashed violence. This lawless behaviour ... cannot be justified."

A few days later David Jenkins, in his enthronement sermon at Durham, took a very different stance, calling for the resignation of the Coal Board chairman, Ian MacGregor, whom he described as an "elderly imported American", and attacking the Government for its indifference to poverty and social unrest. Runcie was soon making similar remarks, telling *The Times* that he supported the Thatcherite aims of growth, higher pay, and the recovery of national pride, but that "if the human consequences of such aims mean unemployment on an unprecedented scale, poverty, bureaucracy, despair about the future of our communities, inequitable sharing of the sacrifice called for, then the objectives must be called in question."

Norman Tebbit, Margaret Thatcher's Industry Secretary, described these observations as "a little woolly", and an unnamed minister added: "What a cheek Runcie's got. He's been closing down economic chances long before we were closing down unemployment."

On Jenkins's theological stance, Runcie preferred to hold the middle ground "where we have to attend to

the whole Christian story". In his 1985 Easter Day sermon in Canterbury Cathedral, he took a firmly traditional theological line. While making no direct reference to the Bishop of Durham, he [said] that the Gospel stories were based on "first-hand memory and firm tradition".

Runcie was now becoming a regular target for mockery in the right-wing popular press. When, in March 1985, he compared Britain's inner-city problems to the Ethiopian famine ("We do not have to look as far as Ethiopia to find the darkness of disease and death"), a Cummings cartoon in the *Daily Express* showed Runcie in the pulpit of a crumbling ecclesiastical edifice, labelled "Church of England", saying "We certainly don't have to look as far as Ethiopia to find the darkness of disaster — it's here on our doorstep". The building is already going up in flames, ignited by David Jenkins, who is clutching a large matchbox.

A few weeks later, Runcie observed: "Some of my predecessors have been polished off in different ways, one of them was beaten to death by mutton bones. I think I'm more likely to be battered by the media."



'I have done my best to die before this book is published'

MY DEAR HUMPHREY

On January 4, 1991, I received this letter from Robert Runcie, who was then in his last month as Archbishop.

I am very busy preparing for my liberation at the end of January. An idea has recently occurred to me which I hope you might be prepared to discuss at some stage. If it has to be knocked on the head without more ado, the sooner the better.

For some time people have been pressing me to approach an official biographer... your books have meant a great deal to me and I am searching for a writer rather than a theologian or church politician.

I have suffered and will, alas, continue to suffer from the unofficial sort of book. There is a collection just out which could be consigned to the category of "Hagiographical Stocking Fillers". There are more to come, but nobody has yet had access to any papers in the Lambeth archives.

I am not looking for a biography that has to come out in my lifetime. Anyway, nothing in the next five years. Yet a biographer would probably want to spend some time with me before I decline into complete decrepitude.

I do not suppose I am a very good subject because I am not myself a writer. On the other hand I have been associated with a good deal of interest in the past decade. There have been a good many people surrounding me who are writers and I suppose that I hope for something like an inkling book. That is one of my favourites. If you thought it was worth a meeting, I would be very happy to give you lunch. Frankly, there are hardly any spaces in my diary before I leave Lambeth. Maybe it could wait until afterwards, but I am at the stage of destroying material and have an archivist at my elbow wishing to pounce on every morsel and a librarian wanting me to sign documents about ownership.

Have you read Owen Chadwick's biography of Michael Ramsey? That is a very different terrain, but it scores high marks on readability and breaks with the old-fashioned ecclesiastical mélange of letters and documents.

I keep in touch with your father and hope to see more of him after retirement. Sister Frances Donlin has arranged for me to have an Oxford *piéd-à-terre* in the convent. They have a spare flat, so that should mean we will see something of each other whether this prospect I have advanced appeals or appals you. Yours ever, Robert

DEAR ROBERT

Many thanks indeed for your utterly surprising and absolutely delightful letter and its invitation. Obviously you require a quick answer, and the quick answer is "yes". We can leave the details until you're a free man. A few random observations: (1) I think you ought to realise that I am no longer a practising and believing member of the Church. A plain old-fashioned agnostic, in fact. I doubt whether this is necessarily a disqualification; I think a biographer always needs a certain distance from his subject. But you ought to be aware of it. (2) I am not sure whether it would be a good idea to wait a long time. I am inclined to say let's get on with it while your memories are absolutely fresh and a large number of people want to know about it all. (3) My only serious doubt is whether you should not write an autobiography instead... I would love to pop in and talk for a few minutes. If I am to do a book, I would like to get a glimpse of your working conditions. Even if this project doesn't happen, it will be delightful to see you again...

Days later, I had a phone call from him, during which we arranged for me to come to Lambeth and Canterbury the following week. He also wrote to me saying he had "no ambition to write my own biography", and added: "I don't mind your failure to pass a test of Anglican orthodoxy. One always hopes that writing my biography might be a conversion experience. But I can't think it would be."

proposals led even *The Times* (December 2) to claim "Church and State lashed into new public quarrel".

I raised the matter of *Faith in the City* in conversation with Baroness Thatcher.

Thatcher: "Faith in the City was very different from the later report of the Jewish community on their approach."

Carpenter: "Different in what way?"

Thatcher: "The Jewish community, as you know, always stuck together. They always made a tremendous effort, they always look after their own, they never asked for — well, you go and read it."

Carpenter: "But you felt that *Faith in the City* ... was turning to the Government, and saying, 'You must do all the work'."

Thatcher: "Well, those are your words. I think it's a

document that could have been written very differently."

Carpenter: "Lord Runcie was talking to me about this, knowing that I was going to speak to you, and he said that he feels, looking back, that the Government, or some people in the Government, did make rather a fuss about *Faith in the City*, but he said it started them on Michael Heseltine's inner-city initiative."

Thatcher: "But the inner-city initiative was long before *Faith in the City*."

Carpenter: "But did you feel the Church was in any way interfering?"

Thatcher: "No, no. Look. I don't try to restrict what other people say."

Edited extracts from Robert Runcie: *The Reluctant Archbishop*, by Humphrey Carpenter, published next month by Hodder and Stoughton, £20. ©1996 Humphrey Carpenter

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Royal Mail marks British motoring's celebration of two centuries this year with a set of five special stamps to be launched on Tuesday, October 1, ranging in denominations from 20p to 63p. First there was the Locomotives on Highways Act of 1896 which allowed the Local Government Board to raise the speed limit for cars from 4mph to 12 mph. The second event in 1896 was the registration of Daimler to build cars in Coventry.

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CHANGING TIMES

THE SS MAHAZEN

A Nile Paddle Steamer Cruise

For winter 1996/97 we are proud to introduce the SS Mahazen paddle steamer. The vessel (designed by the SS Time Machine) was built for the royal government of King Farouk and has now been authentically restored to its 1930's motif. Some aspects will appeal to travellers who are sympathetic to the theme and conditions of comfort but comfortable cabins. It is in fact the sister ship to the MS Mennon, the boat featured in "Death on the Nile".

The programme for the SS Mahazen has been carefully designed to evoke the atmosphere of the early 1930s thus allowing guests to discover Egypt both past and present. The itinerary allows you to see the natural beauty of the Nile and the ancient civilisation of Egypt whilst enjoying period style and modern facilities. To glide down the tranquil waters of the Nile at a steady pace, with just 36 fellow passengers on board, has got to be one of the best ways of spending a week away from a grey British winter.

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مكتبة من الأصل

Ian Hislop on his new TV series on the Church — and how his life changed when Richard Ingrams laughed

'People said you'll lose friends — and so I have'

We have not heard the last of our former archbishops. Next week *Canterbury Tales*, a new Channel 4 series, will follow the tangled tale of the Church of England in the 20th century — chronically at odds with the State — and it is full of surprises.

The first is that the series is presented by Ian Hislop, the Editor of *Private Eye*: less well-known as a fastidiously upright, God-fearing fellow who finds his footsteps at Christmas and Easter leading him to the nearest church.

In a Lenten broadcast three years ago, when Radio 4 invited his reflections, Hislop obliged with a piece quoting Browning's Bishop Blougram: "All we have gained then by our unbelief / Is a life of doubt diversified by faith / For one of faith diversified by doubt..." "A life of doubt diversified by faith is roughly as far as I have got, now that I have reached the age that Christ died," Hislop, then 33, declared.

At 15, he had been dramatically gripped by God at school. There was a charismatic revival at Ardingly (his little-known South Coast boarding school, whose most distinguished old boy was Terry-Thomas). "Two old boys who had become missionaries returned to the school and had a startling effect. Christian Union membership went from about three to 150."

"Boys would get up in chapel services and witness to each other or speak in tongues. There would be mass conversions, hysteria, singing of choruses and exciting prayer meetings in the dormitory. But also a relishing of divine anarchy. The headmaster did the C of E thing, and let it run its course. Then we all did our A levels and went to school dances and started to pick up girls." But the fascination with Church matters has lingered.

We left his grimy office with its amazingly threadbare carpet. Soho is awash with smart brasseries these days but Hislop led me to a greasy spoon with Formica tables, plastic chairs and one solitary customer (male) spooning mush into a portly baby. Here he ordered a pot of tea. "I do find the Church very funny," he said. "It's really the history of guilty public schoolboys trying to reach out to the working classes."

In a deeply embarrassing opening piece of *Pathé News* footage from 1962, Father Tony Brown is seen putting a leather jacket over his cassock, riding his motorbike to a bikers' cafe and doing the Twist with Rockers. "Such a good metaphor for the C of E's desperate attempts to appeal to young people." Weren't the

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



aged prelates slightly astonished to find the Editor of *Private Eye* interviewing them? "I think they have sufficient historical focus to realise that the history of satire is largely written by embittered priests, from Dean Swift onwards. And after meeting all these fantastically old chaplains and slum priests, I can't help admiring them really."

The series tells forgotten stories — about the tide riots of the 1930s, and Conrad Noel, the vicar of Thaxted, who hung the red flag in his church. Women priests barely signify, "because after all the apocalyptic warnings, almost nothing happened. Last Christmas I went to a very high, smells-and-bells church in Clapham with a woman vicar and it seemed perfectly normal."

He married his wife Victoria in Magdalen Chapel, walking down the aisle to the stirring sounds of *Zadok the Priest*. They have two children, and live "near Wandsworth Common. That's specific enough for the loonies" and at a country retreat in Somerset, near Christopher Booker's old rectory. "Booker is one of my father figures."

Hislop's own father died when he was 12, and his mother died two years ago, so beneath the quick-wittedness is a melancholy perspective on life. His mother was always on his side — when he changed his A levels, switched his degree, and announced that he wanted to make jokes for a living, she always said: "Why not?"

He did not even see *Private Eye* until he was an undergraduate. Living abroad as a child, his introduction to humour was from his parents' records of *Beyond the Fringe* and *Flanders and Swann*. At Oxford he did comedy revues, and started his own magazine, *Passing Wind* — "appalling title, imagine trying to sell adverts to shops in the High"

— with Nick Newman the cartoonist. He sent the magazine to Ingrams before going to interview him. (An effective way of getting on in media society. Tina Brown started at Oxford by writing about an *Eye* lunch.)

What changed his life was managing not to bore Richard Ingrams. Most people found Ingrams's impassive features and disconcerting silences intimidating; the undergraduate Hislop, unfazed, managed to make Ingrams laugh.

Ingrams allowed him to contribute jokes, and after a couple of years, made Hislop guest editor "in a spirit of mischief, really, just to see how annoyed everybody else would be. Which was very annoyed indeed. There was a lot of queenly bouncing out and 'who is this ridiculous little pipsqueak?'"

Soon the boy wonder was being groomed to take over. Ingrams took a long summer break, and again left the pipsqueak in charge. It took

A balding little fogey was among the kinder epithets

some time to change my mind once I had children, as a lot of my contemporaries do. Does he care what people think of him? "Not hugely. But I don't have Richard's total indifference. People said 'you'll lose friends', and I have." Does he pray? "I have resorted to prayer, yes."

Like the organ-playing Ingrams, he is unable to accept attacks on the Deity, but perfectly happy to run attacks on the Church of England, which persists in providing the *Eye* with obvious targets. I hope to see next week's *Eye* parodying that risible new Christmas campaign, *Bad Hair Day*.

Part of me is slightly envious of people who take over magazines that are no bloody good, which offer scope for improvement," Hislop says. "I took it on at one of its peaks. Why change it?"

Even its victims must concede that life would be very boring without it. There is more attention to fat cats, pigs with their snouts in the trough, company directors plundering pension funds, etc. The libels have waned, after Hislop's memorable declaration "if this is justice, I'm a banana" on the steps of the High Court. There are fewer gibes at people of restricted growth. The cartoons are as good as ever.

Later that day he would be hosting the usual *Eye* lunch, at the horrible Coach and Horses, where guests — who included a famous television journalist and two Labour MPs — are encouraged to spill beans. He said later it had been "very productive".

He has a fortnightly column in a Sunday magazine where he airs his views — lately about the improvement in the



The God-fearing satirist: "The Church is really the history of guilty public schoolboys trying to reach out," says Hislop

GOLDEN DAYS



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All change at the checkout

I HAVE seen the future for shopping, and it is a doddle. The ordeal of standing in line at the supermarket checkout queue is going to be abolished. For the people of Reigate, Surrey, this dream became reality recently when their local Safeway became the first store in the country to accept automatic payment for goods they had scanned themselves as they filled their trolleys.

I was sent to Reigate to pick holes in the system, check out the technology and generally do my utmost to expose any weaknesses. First I had to register my Safeway ABC loyalty card for use with the new system. A work of moments, no difficulty there. Now when my loyalty card was put in a slot in the automatic payment system I was authorised to take a hand-scanner from the rack.

I elected to shop with a basket rather than a trolley and deliberately chose all the items most notoriously difficult to scan with a laser beam — things with crinkly packages and buckled bar-codes. The scanner worked every time. I did not even have to put my basket down to work it.

Fresh fruit and vegetables sold loose have to be taken to a weigh point where a display board helps even the most ignorant to identify what it is they are purchasing. Touch a pad under the appropriate picture, and out comes a bar-coded slip with all the information the automatic till will require. Little difficulty there.

Robin Young on the revolution in supermarkets

ALAS, when we checked, it proved the mistake was mine, not the machinery's. I had been caught inadvertently trying to smuggle a jar of sun-dried tomatoes out without paying. On the other hand, the system had itself slipped me an odd 10p by refunding £2.35 on a multisave that should only have been worth £2.25.

And when both those items were taken into account there was still a difference of 7p (in my favour) in the totals which was unaccounted for. "It is probably one of the fresh produce items where the store barcode has not been changed when we reduced the price overnight," Hazel confessed.

I paid by putting my loyalty card into a slot, presenting my itemised invoice in another slot for scanning, and then inserting a credit card. No queueing, no need to sign, no fuss. It was game, set and match to

and hunted for "multi-savers", linked purchases which trigger special discounts or give the shopper something free.

At the automatic payment point I placed my hand-scanner back in the rack and received in return an itemised account of my purchases. As a first-time customer, a note at the bottom told me that I had to take my basket to be rescanned by Safeway staff. Hooray! The customer services controller, Hazel Kerry, told me I was one of the few whose hand-scanned total did not tally with the staff's own reckoning.

ALAS, when we checked, it proved the mistake was mine, not the machinery's. I had been caught inadvertently trying to smuggle a jar of sun-dried tomatoes out without paying. On the other hand, the system had itself slipped me an odd 10p by refunding £2.35 on a multisave that should only have been worth £2.25.

I paid by putting my loyalty card into a slot, presenting my itemised invoice in another slot for scanning, and then inserting a credit card. No queueing, no need to sign, no fuss. It was game, set and match to

Philip Howard



Best foot forward for the local historian of our pedestrian race

By toasted teacake time today, Professor Christopher Elrington will roll up to the west front of York Minster. He will be travelling by Walker's Bus, otherwise known as Verruca's Scooter and the Fallen Arch Stagecoach. And he will be limping towards the end of his historic hike of more than 1,100 miles through all the shire counties of England. En route he has been pressganged into pushing the caravan of a dreadlocked traveller (at Tintagel). He has found himself entirely surrounded by barbed wire in a ploughed field in fenestri Cambridgeshire, only to be informed by the ploughman that the footpath he was following was for locals only, and so hidden. He has lost a stone, having started with nothing to lose. He has lost his way many times, but never his temper or his determination to carry on hiking.

For Professor Elrington is in the tradition of eccentric English walkers. He does not have the excuse of Phyllis Pearsall. She walked 3,000 miles to list the 23,000 roads for her *London A-Z* (which would be even more useful if some of the roads in Apache territory were marked with street signs). Slanderers said Phyllis walked only because she continually failed her driving test. Elrington claims to be a good driver, and is said (unpersuasively) to have passed his driving test.

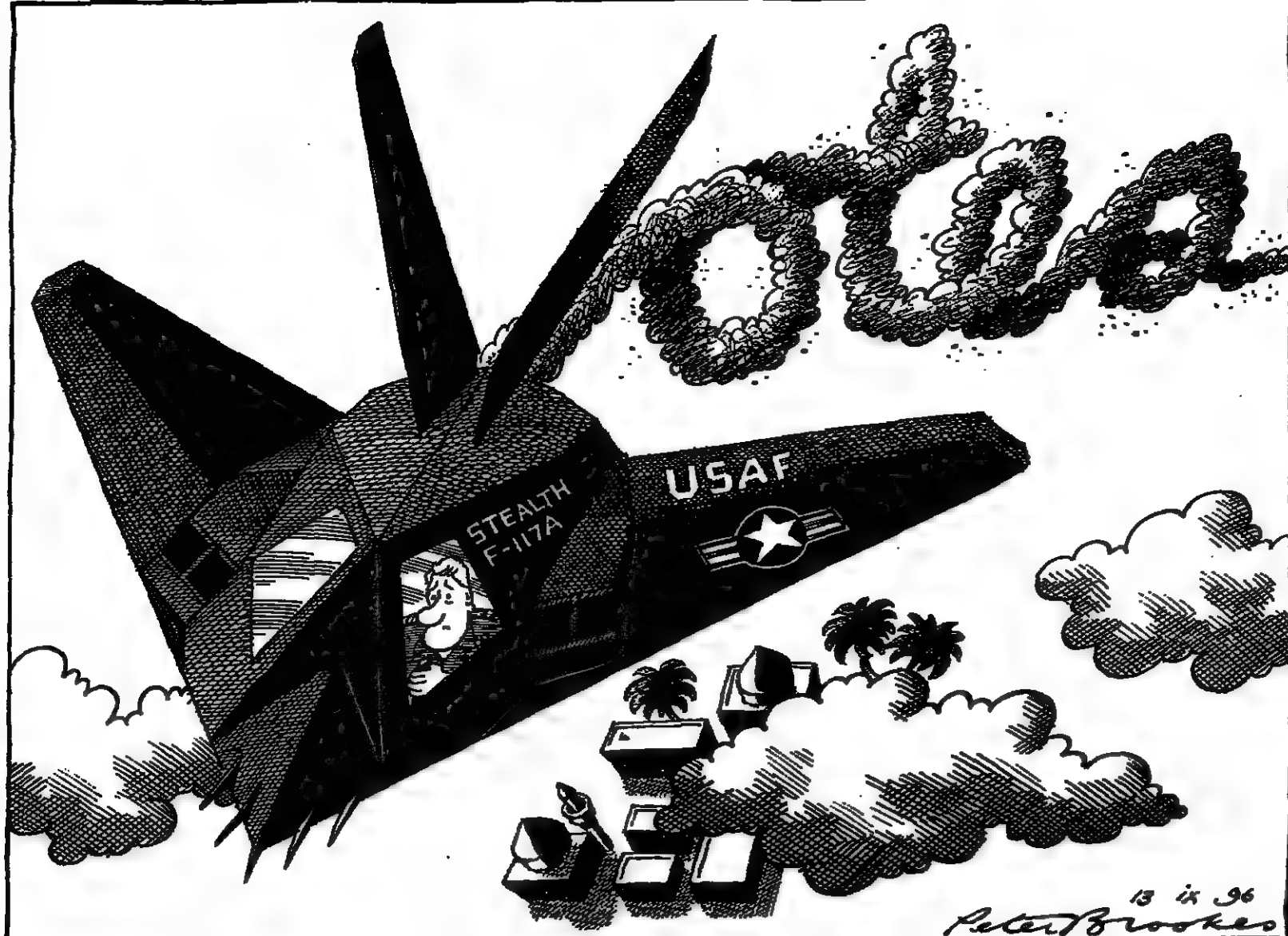
Nor is he walking just for pleasure. The busy English idea of going for a walk for no other purpose than going for a walk is as nauseating to Elrington as to Millamant. This eminent professor walks to spread the slogan for his *Victoria County History*. Any writer worth his modern who has to write about a county, town, parish or local peculiarity of England turns first to the VCH. If all the books that have been cribbed from the VCH were recycled into trees, they would make enough to recover the English counties with their primeval forest.

The VCH is one of the great Victorian literary institutions, like the OED, the DNB and *The Times*. More than 200 of its large red volumes have been published, but as many more still wait in the pipeline. The research and writing are financed largely by grants from public funds in the counties, and recently some of those grants have been reduced or withdrawn. So Professor Elrington has decided to put left leg in front of right, then right leg in front of left, and repeat the procedure until he can bring the majestic project to completion. That would be a far more useful object for the Millennium Fund than any of the daft proposals so far. For the VCH is the seedbed of English history.

And we English are a race of pedestrians. The Normans conquered us with horsemen in steel, but we English footmen turned our backs, plucked on and assimilated the mounted foreigners. Our country is small enough to be walkable. And it is far more interesting seen from a footpath than from a motorway. The most revealing *Rural Rides* have actually been rural walks. And walking London has a long literary tradition: remember young Dickens lying in bed in Highgate hearing the rattle of thousands of feet walking into London at 4am to work.

John Taylor, the "Water Poet" (1580-1653) made his living from sponsored walks. In 1618 he undertook to travel on foot from London to Edinburgh without taking a penny in his pocket, nor "begging, borrowing, or asking meat, drink, or lodging". These and similar hikes provided him with good copy, the patronage of the famous and a reputation as the McGonagall of his age. Like McGonagall, Taylor aspired to be Shakespeare: "Though I deserve not, I desire / The laurel wreath, the poet's hire." He never quite made it. The DNB unkindly describes him as a literary bargee — but it gives six pages of his publications.

To walk is the defining activity of man. When it is about 14 months old, the conscious mind commands a child "Stand!" And the child has entered the human commitment to walk upright. And immediately it needs a playpen. Walking is not exactly it. It is we of the deskbound, chairbound, carbound, travelator-surfing generation who are inhuman. And the hiking professor is just walking back to his roots in support of the local roots of history.



Abroad really is bloody

How few are the places of peace, and how lucky we are to live in one of them

Come, let us put all care aside for a change and think only about merriment, wassail, laughter and the pleasant side of the weather. And we shall start with a most striding headline: "Cars overturned as mob attacks National Gallery". Bravol! How wonderful it is to be living in a country so thirsty for art that it can never be slaked, and — as the headline tells — Trafalgar Square has been full of people fighting, literally fighting, to get a mere glimpse of the Degas and the Stubbs at the National Gallery.

No, alas, readers, I am cheating; I dare say you realised that. But if you didn't, try this:

England football fans went on the rampage after the national football team's Wembley defeat last night, throwing missiles at police and bystanders, looting shops and burning cars... crowd-control barriers were overturned and a hot-dog stand smashed by thugs eager to take on the police in a pitched battle... shortly after midnight the mob surged to the north of Trafalgar Square, standing on the steps of the National Gallery, throwing missiles through its windows...

We might as well toss in a few headlines, for instance: "Russian student stabbed five times in the neck and chest after his attackers heard his accent"; "Dozens of cars set on fire... Groups of yobs intent on confrontation... Riot stirred up by four gangs"; and of course — it is absolutely *de rigueur* in these merriments — "MPs say tabloids are to blame for football violence".

And that is only football. There are lots more from other sources. Take the 74-year-old Betty Ellis, who was in Dachau concentration camp and lived to tell the tale. But Nazi gauleiters are nothing to the children of Birmingham today. A 10-year-old knocked on her door, asking if he could get his football back from her garden, and when she let him in, he and another boy allegedly knocked her to the ground, broke a couple of her ribs, and ran off with her purse. To which she said: "You just don't expect children to do that sort of thing." Oh, Madam, you had better start expecting *right now*.

By now the theme of my column must be coming clear. But I must say that I am not just piling up a heap of dreadfulnesses (though I could pile up an Everest of them in half an hour); my purpose is to make clear the differences of our horrors and the horrors of other countries. I begin with Sri Lanka.

What though the spicy breezes Blow soft over Ceylon's isle; Though every prospect pleases, And only man is vile?

"And only man is vile". You're telling me, Bishop, especially when I see a headline reading "Troops kill 200 rebels in Sri Lankan assault". The Tamil Tigers want a separate state; the leaders of Sri Lanka do not want to give them one. Silly? "Sunday's fighting... has claimed 300 lives." How silly can you get?

And Peru's long struggle against the Shining Path guerrilla group has taken a turn for the worse: "with a deadly series of bombings and attacks... more than 35,000 people... since 1980... government has detained more than 500,000 suspects..."

And then again there is Seoul, South Korea, where "prosecutors demanded, on Monday, that a former President, Chun Doo Hwan, be executed, and that his successor, Roh Tae Woo, be imprisoned for life for presiding over some of the bloodiest days of South Korea's authoritarian past... Both men are also accused of using bribes to amass hundreds of millions of dollars in secret political slush funds."

And what about that startling headline "Algeria buries murdered bishop"? If the murder of bishops is to become a frequent occurrence, things have come to a pretty pass, but the truth is that the murder of bishops is indeed going to grow; you only need the mad Islamic fundamentalists, who have killed and will continue to kill.

And what of the power struggle in Indonesia? Suharto was and is nothing but the head of a murderous regime of thugs, who like having their opponents killed if they can get away with it, which they can. And I remember vividly the apologies for the regime by Patrick Nicholson, MP, who was very cross with me because I wrote 1,500 words on the genocidal regime that slaughtered

countless innocents at East Timor (experts say probably about 200,000). I wonder if Mr Nicholson, MP, is having second thoughts now about what happened: if so, I shall be the first to congratulate him.

And why — Mr Nicholson, MP, may say — is this story being brought up again now? It is because the oppressed people of East Timor, and indeed the Indonesian opposition, have once again found a hero (actually a heroine) to plead their case before the bar of decency, truth, honour and democracy — four things that Suharto knows not of.

The heroine is Megawati Sukarnoputri, and we might start with the obvious. The obvious is that Suharto and members of his family and friends have accumulated vast wealth; the corruption is so gross that the middle classes, who are well-off by Indonesian standards, can expect, so how do we secure it? After all, the peaceful places of the world come down to a sprinkling of Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand, my beloved India (hanging on by its teeth), Canada (but alas not the United States), bits and pieces from this or that continent. In how few countries — how few? — can people be sure that when they lie down to sleep they will also wake.

We all think grimly: "Suppose I had been born somewhere else — somewhere terrible?" After all, we are only a tiny bundle among the huge numbers. And indeed I might have missed being born in Britain: both my grandparents and my father were born in Russia, and they might have stayed there, to be murdered by Stalin or Hitler.

Go down the lines again — the lines of Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers, Peru's Shining Path, Seoul, Algeria, Indonesia, South Africa. And pause for a few moments in silence. And if tonight you wake screaming, thank your forebears that it was only a dream.

Now let us go back, for a moment, to Mrs Betty Ellis. Take the words that she said as soon as she was capable of speech after being assaulted: "You just don't expect children to do that sort of thing." I made a harmless joke, but burnt into my mind and soul in that moment was something very much greater than any joke.

Look through that catalogue of horrors, of countries where no man or woman is truly safe. Look thoroughly, because I have the list at my hand: Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers; Peru and the Shining Path; South Korea; Algeria; Indonesia; South Africa. And I have not mentioned Burundi or Grozny.

Bernard Levin

I am sure that it could not be in better hands than a former pupil of Holywell Grammar School — as I once was myself!

Her request was granted.

School's in

ANN CLWYD, MP, may be an unreconstructed old Labourite and thorn in Tony Blair's side, but she recognises the old school tie when she needs it. Clwyd wrote to Sir Ronald Waterhouse, chairman of the current tribunal of inquiry into North Wales child abuse, on behalf of five of the victims. She was asking the judge to rule that funds be made available for their representation. Thoughtfully she concluded her letter: "Can I wish you every success with the inquiry."

My vote for stylish diplomacy goes to our man in the Ukraine, the no-nonsense bearded motorbike rider Roy Reeve. He's never been seen on a sunbed, but he gets the job done better than most.

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THE SECRETS of Peter Lilley's underwear will be revealed by his wife Gail to millions of television viewers next Thursday in a BBC2 documentary, *The System*.

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We pick up *The Times* at breakfast, and all too frequently we find in it a murder, or a brutal robbery. But just as we shake our heads in sadness and horror, we stop, or we should. Because we have realised that in our country such crimes are the rarity, and in every one of that catalogue of countries it is the norm, and for mass murder of children we have to go to Dunblane and a raving lunatic. (But I must not cheat; springing from Belgium, a new horror has grown, and we learn that the number of paedophiles grows apace in our country.)

Perfection is not to be found this side of heaven. But a reasonable measure of ordinariness, calm, decency and laughter, we can expect. So how do we secure it? After all, the peaceful places of the world come down to a sprinkling of Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand, my beloved India (hanging on by its teeth), Canada (but alas not the United States), bits and pieces from this or that continent. In how few countries — how few? — can people be sure that when they lie down to sleep they will also wake.

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Social services on trial

Sheila Lawlor on alternatives to the officials' monopoly

Every week there seems to be a new story about the powers of the social services and their abuse. Yesterday, an independent inquiry was set up into Hackney local authority's handling of the Mark Trotter affair. A childcare worker with a police record of abusing children in Liverpool was employed by Hackney and worked at a children's home. Seventeen councillors resigned over what they saw as a cover-up. Despite a violation of the law, there was no simple or quick way to challenge bureaucratic authority.

And there is another aspect to an overpowered local bureaucracy. Last week's tale of the father caught up in a world of police arrest and overnight incarceration, and subsequently made the subject of a report by the local social services, has tinges of Kafka. The father had reprimanded his 12-year-old son for bullying the younger children. The boy refused to go to his room, and in the course of a struggle to take him there, his father slapped him. The boy went to the police station to report the "crime". The police came to arrest the father — a teacher with no record of wrongdoing — despite his wife's explaining the situation. He spent the night in jail, was banned from the family home and subsequently brought to court.

Were the authorities in this case acting legally? Technically, yes. A child can report an assault and, under the 1989 Children Act, bring an action against his father. The police can investigate and arrest. The social services can advise the police and the courts on the interests of the child.

Yet this is not Kafka's country but Britain, where the liberties of individual men and women, including parents, are supposedly protected. Innocence is presumed unless guilt is proven. Parliamentary rules, not bureaucracy. A knock on the door should not pose a sinister threat — unless one is a criminal.

Such simple truths have been occluded as the intellectual fashions of recent decades have left their mark on law and policy. Campaigns for new thinking about "rights" have singled out specific groups (women, ethnic minorities, children) for special treatment under the law. But one group's "rights", promoted as an end in themselves, are often at the expense of another's.

Take the Children Act of 1989. The laudable intention was to protect both children and parents. Yet as with other good intentions of the 1980s, the law in its practical application has ended by reflecting the views of pressure groups. Thus the rights of the parents, the family or of the other children may take second place to that of the child who takes the case to law. In another recent case, a 16-year-old girl left home to live with her boyfriend against her parents' wishes. She received legal aid to challenge the parental sanction that she should not now see her six and seven-year-old siblings.

Along with legal changes, there has been a huge expansion of the machinery of state. The powers and budgets of local authority social services departments have expanded, and they enjoy a near monopoly on official advice and judgement on law and directives relating to families and children. In the 25 years of their existence, they have supplanted the voluntary and charitable bodies which in the past gave social care.

The potential power of the official had been anticipated much earlier by the German sociologist Max Weber. In 1918, in a lecture on socialism, he argued that "in public enterprises... the powerfully and exclusively dominant figure is the official: it is not the worker... it is the dictatorship of the official... which... is on the advance."

The question facing us today is how to challenge that dictatorship. In the long term, the law itself will need radical review — not by the interest groups, but by non-partisan and practical lawyers, sceptical of the modes of thinking which have brought the law into disrepute and disturbed the balance of justice.

But justice should not await that outcome. To protect children, and indeed parents, a way to challenge the monopoly of the official must be quickly established. Social services should no longer have monopoly powers over children at risk. In dealing with parents, the police should seek advice from reputable people outside the battlefield of doctrine: employers, schools, the family doctor, churches. In other areas too (such as adoption), reputable independent and charitable bodies should be encouraged to register as providers of services now almost exclusively in hands of officials, and responsibility and funding should be diverted. A precedent has been established in school inspection, with independent inspectors being registered under Ofsted.

Furthermore, the police should be encouraged to concentrate on real crime — burglary, assault and child abuse — rather than on soft targets who are far from being criminal. Misguided adolescents, as well as their innocent parents, would benefit. When the police and social services take up children's complaints, the result is to split them further from their families and to turn them into clients of the social worker or the welfare state. They would do better to ride out the difficulties of growing up under the care of their parents, for whom children are not part of the struggle for a new society, but treasured though imperfect souls to be nurtured to responsible adulthood.

The author is director of the independent think-tank Politica.

My optic

UNSETTLING news from the literary world. Auberon Waugh, Editor of the *Literary Review* and distinguished columnist, can no longer read books. Deteriorating eyesight has precipitated this sad state of affairs, which he is bearing with impressive equanimity.

Waugh has taken to wearing a vast magnifying glass round his neck to help his weary eyes, but this helps only a little. "I don't need books any more," he said. "My eyes go out of focus after a very short time. I can read short passages, but books are impossible."

Bron was speaking of his difficulty at a literary function held this week at the Groucho Club in Soho. Fortunately, there is no danger of the disability forcing him to hand over the reins of his fine magazine. "Not reading books is probably rather a good recommendation for being Editor of the *Literary Review*," he said.

● Sound medical advice was given by Dr Jonathan Miller to his leading diva in rehearsal before his production of *La traviata* last night at the ENO. He insisted that the dying heroine remained firmly in bed throughout the last

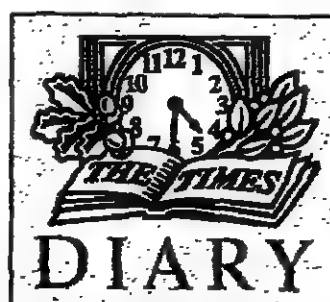
act. "She just wouldn't have the energy to do anything else," he explained to the cast. "So we won't have the customary final lap of honour round the stage before she collapses and dies, thank you."

Party strife

PARANOIA is tightening its grip on Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party, and with good reason.



"We think it was welded together from two vehicles."



When they stop sweeping their HQ for bugging devices, party workers should look carefully at two of their latest candidate recruits, John Aspinall and James Osborne. They share a nephew in George Osborne, special adviser to Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture. At the general election, as his uncles fight their seats for Goldsmith, the Gucci-clad George Osborne will be giving daily morning press briefings to the Prime Minister.

More evidence of nervousness in the Referendum Party comes in an edit from Goldsmith's bunker, stating that party organisers are to abstain from lunching with the press until after the election.

● Time to end the rumours surrounding Princess Caroline of Monaco's shaven head. It is not the result of chemotherapy or any punk leanings. According to close

friends, the explanation is alopecia, a scalp condition remedied by plenty of fresh air and sunshine on the bare head.

School's in

ANN CLWYD, MP, may be an unreconstructed old Labourite and thorn in Tony Blair's side, but she recognises the old school tie when she needs it. Clwyd wrote to Sir Ronald Waterhouse, chairman of the current tribunal of inquiry into North Wales child abuse, on behalf of five of the victims. She was asking the judge to rule that funds be made available for their representation. Thoughtfully she concluded her letter: "Can I wish you every success with the inquiry."



Speedy diplomacy

I am sure that it could not be in better hands than a former pupil of Holywell Grammar School — as I once was myself!

Her request was granted.

Reeve gauche

NEWS that French ambassadors have been instructed to boost their country's prestige by dressing with more style and tanning themselves cuts little ice in Whitehall. They remember Sir Antony Acland, slicker than Brylcreem, when he was described in Washington as having "one pinstripe too many".

My vote for stylish diplomacy goes to our man in the Ukraine, the no-nonsense bearded motorbike rider Roy Reeve. He's never been seen on a sunbed, but he gets the job done better than most.

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THE SECRETS of Peter Lilley's underwear will be revealed by his wife Gail to millions of television viewers next Thursday in a BBC2 documentary, *The System*.

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Debbie Harry in the old days

"It's not a beauty contest," he complains. Mrs Lilley disagrees: "Parade around in your boxer shorts," she says.

● Broader in the beam and saggier of chin, Blondie, the 1970s pop group, are re-forming. Possibly hoping to fill the gap left by the apparent split of Oasis, four members of the band are to join up for a reprise of such foot-tappers as Atomic and Denis Denis. The re-grouping follows the rather disappointing solo career of the lead singer Debbie Harry.

P.H.S

مكذبا من الأصل



CURB THE CULL

Britain must no longer wait for vague EU promises

It was announced from Downing Street yesterday that Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, is to hold a fresh round of talks with Brussels on the cattle cull. What he should tell the European Commission is that the Government now sees no valid scientific, political or moral reason for carrying out the massive slaughter that it has been cajoled by its European partners into accepting.

All the latest evidence shows that a more limited cull would be workable and no less effective in eradicating BSE. Such an announcement risks the anger of European partners; but this is as nothing compared with the disastrous effects the present vacillation is having on Britain's farmers and on the Government's credibility.

The Government has an obligation to ensure that British beef is safe and to do what it can to prise open the export markets. The sole rationale for a cull that would wreak financial and emotional havoc on Britain's farmers is that only by killing such large numbers will Britain persuade its partners to lift the export ban. It is now abundantly clear that no matter how many cattle are slaughtered, European governments, faced with a collapsing beef market and fierce consumer resistance, have no intention of allowing British beef back into their countries or of easing the global export ban. In speeches and committee hearings they have given every sign that for them the Florence understanding is an empty shell. Britain should, therefore, repatriate the issue. Henceforth all decisions on how to deal with this catastrophe must be based on the only valid criterion: available scientific evidence.

That has always been in short supply. Recent figures argue, however, for a more targeted approach. The most encouraging is the announcement that since the end of May there have been no cases of the new form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. There has not

been the predicted explosion of the presumed human equivalent of BSE. The second finding is that BSE is likely to run its course within five years. That is still too long, and uncertainty has been increased by the discovery of maternal transmission. The Government should stick to its insistence that 22,000 last-born calves must be destroyed. But there is no need to increase the cull simply to regain consumer confidence.

Mr Hogg will meet the predictable opposition of the Commission to any reduction in the cull's scope. That is because beef politics is one of the most sensitive issues in Europe today and because EU nations could not endorse the scrapping of the Florence agreement so soon after it was hailed as the way forward. But Franz Fischler, the Agriculture Commissioner, is not alone in knowing that Florence was, in reality, an accord which satisfied no one. He and his fellow Commissioners would be heartily glad to see the BSE issue removed from their dossiers. They cannot give Britain any assurance that the export ban will be lifted, even within two years. They see a British beef market that is recovering, and do not want to be the butt of British farmers' anger, or caught in constant rows between veterinary committees.

The Government's focus must now turn inwards. So far the cull is behind target, erratic and badly organised. Farmers have no idea how many cows they will eventually have to kill, how long they must feed those condemned, who is supervising the timetable for the cows' destruction and what steps the Government will take to compensate them for their losses. It has been a failure of nerve, of policy and of political vision. Mr Hogg should tell the Commission in Brussels that Britain will no longer wait for vague promises or vanishing prospects of relief. The disease began here and will be eradicated here: not on the streets of Paris or among the fearful consumers of Germany.

ADAPT OR DIE

South Africa's National Party requires fundamental reform

For a man who has had such an enormous impact on the future of his country, F. W. de Klerk's impression on the National Party he heads has been surprisingly modest. As his interview with *The Times* today indicates, the former President knows his objective must be to rectify that imbalance. South Africa, he rightly argues, needs greater party competition based less strictly on race.

The African National Congress, as Mr de Klerk sees it, is an anti-apartheid coalition that now faces the politics of hard choices. While Nelson Mandela remains at the helm its diverse strands will probably hold together; after that its factions could drift apart. The task before the National Party, by contrast, is to reach out to a much wider constituency than it has hitherto. That challenge is easily identified. How to meet it has proved more contentious.

Several factors conspired to delay reform. While the party was engaged in negotiations for the transfer of power between 1990 and 1993 this task seemed far more important than introspection. But because of that missed chance it entered the first all-race elections in April 1994 with little message beyond exploiting the concerns of whites, Indians, and Coloureds over what a black majority regime might do. After that it joined the Government of National Unity, again postponing significant internal change despite a deepening identity crisis. All this was compounded by the hasty decision to leave office this summer before the party's fundamental questions had been addressed, never mind answered.

Mr de Klerk has recently turned his full attention to this problem. His appointment

in February of Roelf Meyer, a highly regarded former Minister of Constitutional Development, as party secretary-general was a positive step. Yet the wider matter of the party's direction is still very uncertain. It remains obsessed with an unconvincing justification of its past.

In his remarks Mr de Klerk spoke of the importance of "values" in a future political appeal. That implies some sort of African Christian Democratic Party as his model. An organisation of this title and thinking already exists and has not demonstrated electoral appeal. There is little evidence that enough South Africans want to take religion into politics in this manner. It is also difficult to envisage any direct appeal to the expanding black middle class, surely the basis for any serious future rival to the ANC, emerging from this route. Large sections of the National Party, especially its black supporters, acknowledge this and have urged a sweeping reassessment.

When he first embarked on his historic programme it was fashionable to bracket Mr de Klerk with Mikhail Gorbachev. That comparison looked less flattering as time went on and he was rigorously resisted by him now. It might, however, be worth his while investigating the means by which some former Communists in Central and Eastern Europe have engineered their comeback. That strategy involved a new name, accepting the verdict of history and drawing a line under it, rapidly promoting new figures untainted by the past, and eagerly adapting to a new economic environment. If it is to prosper, or even survive, the National Party will require no less radical a transformation.

SEE THE MYSTERIES

A Chinese guide for the present and the past

Today the British Museum opens its doors to the first explorers of *The Mysteries of Ancient China*. It is not only a thrilling exhibition to the eye: the objects on display have, in only a few years, forced the rewriting of history.

This is the second great China exhibition to be sponsored by *The Times*. The first, *The Genius of China* at Burlington House in 1973, opened the eyes of thousands to the vigour, sophistication and captivating artistry of Chinese culture. It caught and held the imagination of young people for whom this had been unknown territory; some of them now belong to the British Museum's new generation of China scholars.

This exhibition takes the process of exploration a stage further. Brought from museums all over China with the generous co-operation of Zhang Wenbin, the director of China's State Administration of Cultural Relics, are clay pots, bronzes and jades from Chinese Bronze Age societies whose existence was until very recently unsuspected by the Chinese themselves.

This mood of discovery is captured immediately at the entrance to the exhibition, where the Marquis of Yi's 36 great bronze bell chimes, dating back to the Warring States period in the 5th century BC, were being magnificently remounted. It was these bells, together with another set found near by, that yielded a map of the Ancient

European Renaissance, China turned with passion to its hidden past.

The archaeologists who are sifting China's rich yellow earth are natural partners for journalists. We both chase new knowledge; we both learn to respect the tricks of evidence; and we share a driving interest in the methods, beliefs and organisation by which human beings form their diverse societies and nations. Alongside the fascination of uncovering hidden histories comes the pleasure of finding how similar are human impulses, even when lives are separated by great tracts of time and space. We may pride ourselves that our methods of inquiry are more precise than were the divination tools used by 13th-century BC Shang priests, but the topics that concerned them — military strategy, the harvest and the hunt, the weather and even royal misadventures — are familiar.

For *The Times* therefore, this renews a proud tradition of cultural sponsorship in a particularly appropriate way. Joseph Needham, the great pioneer of the history of Chinese science, once wrote of Europe and China that "no sea divides us, but oceans do". The oceans of incomprehension are much less formidable today, but voyages such as this exhibition provides are rarely on offer. Those who visit *The Mysteries of Ancient China* between now and January 5 will delight in its surprises and its beauty; they will also gain something less tangible

Uncertain future of student loans

From Mr Richard Tate

Sir, The announcement that the Government intends to privatise the student loans scheme (report and Pennington, September 12) fills me, a new student, with dismay. The Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, claims that the terms on which students receive loans will not change; if this is so, why is the scheme being privatised?

In my view the student loans scheme should not be run by a company which makes a profit; indeed any money made should be used for administration costs. Surely any buyer would want to increase profitability, and this inevitably has serious ramifications for student finance. I will be attending Nottingham Trent University in a couple of weeks, with a full annual maintenance grant of £1,710; my accommodation costs alone in a hall of residence will amount to £2,055, therefore I cannot see a way of avoiding taking out a loan from the Student Loans Company at some point.

The Government does not seem to realise that students are the future of this country and that most will be eligible to vote in the general election for the first time. It seems to me that, with the cuts in higher education funding and maintenance grants, the Government is, in essence, stealing from the country's future.

The Student Loans Company is an organisation in which students are forced to place a great deal of trust. That trust should not be undermined by a Government which needs money to try to bribe the electorate with tax cuts in November.

There should be adequate safeguards to ensure that the financial burdens on students are not exacerbated by unreasonable demands, through interest charges or repayment pressure, from a private company or consortium out to make a quick profit.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD TATE,
5 Bainton Road, Tibthorpe,
nr Driffield, East Yorkshire.
September 12.

Russia's Army

From Lieutenant Commander D. L. Thomas RN (ret'd)

Sir, "Does not the war in Chechnia, like the Afghan war before it, show that the might of the Russian Army is after all a myth, created by the Russians and the West to frighten us all?" asks Mr Nasir Saberi (letter, August 31).

The answer is "No, not really." The Russian Army during the Cold War was specifically designed for the rapid conquest of Western Europe using World War Two-style blitzkrieg tactics. What it lacked in technical sophistication was compensated for by weight of numbers in men and materiel.

Once the smaller professional military forces available to Nato had been overwhelmed and destroyed, the Western European countries could be held down by a combination of quelling, the KGB and Interior Ministry troops. Resistance movements would be difficult to organise and would lack effective weapons, it having been a policy of Western European governments since 1917 to disarm their populations as a prophylactic against revolution.

In both Afghanistan and Chechnia the Russian Army was being tasked with operations for which it was neither trained nor equipped. Short of implementing a policy of total destruction (of both people and property) its failure was predictable. Also, perhaps crucially, most Afghan men possessed rifles and knew how to use them.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID THOMAS,
Akroyd Cottage, Abbey Park Lane,
Burnham, Buckinghamshire.
September 3.

Mapplethorpe show

From the Director of the Hayward Gallery

Sir, Contrary to your report of September 9, "Child charities attack gallery's explicit display", the portrait of a young girl which you mention is not included in the forthcoming retrospective of Robert Mapplethorpe's work opening here next week.

This comprehensive exhibition (including the portrait in question) has already travelled to 13 major public galleries worldwide, to great acclaim. We have always known that the Hayward would not be able to accommodate all the works, due to space limitations. Given the nature of Mapplethorpe's work, we consulted the police and took legal advice some time ago.

In considering our final selection, we concluded that it would be inappropriate, in the current climate, to include this particular portrait, commissioned from the artist in 1976. The exhibition will nevertheless represent the full range of Mapplethorpe's powerful and uncompromising work.

Yours sincerely,
SUSAN BRADSHAW, Director,
Hayward Gallery,
SBC, Royal Festival Hall, SE1.
September 10.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Case for a Defender of the Faith with 'honest doubts'

From Dr N. C. Bhaskaran

Sir, I feel compelled to respond to the debate, addressed today by William Renshaw, on whether the Prince of Wales should be seen to "love the Church a little more" in order to be the constitutional Defender of the Faith of the Church of England (see also letters, September 10 and 11).

The fact that the Prince projects a religious broad-mindedness, acknowledging the role of other religions, cannot be held against him. Broad-minded views can only unite the hopelessly divided world, in which today more fights are fought in the name of God than in any other.

One would have imagined that the theologians would be in the forefront of a concerted effort to unite rather than to divide people in the name of religion.

It is a credit to Prince Charles, and the entire Church of England, that he is able to see that Church as no more equal than other religions.

Yours sincerely,
N. C. BHASKARAN,
51 Robertson Road,
Walkley, Sheffield.
September 12.

From Mr Stephen N. David

Sir, With due respect to the arguments in your leading article of September 10, I believe that the monarch's job is to be, not to feel, to be a symbol, not an agonising soul.

Anglicanism is part of the job description of the monarch, and part of the constitution of 50 million people. Charles should accept the whole package, not just the parts he prefers. If the heir to the throne cannot put the demands of the constitution ahead of his personal beliefs, then a republic is inevitable.

Yours faithfully,
S. N. DAVID,
The Mill, Godmanstone, Dorset.
September 10.

From Ms Gillian Cohn

Sir, What I found particularly offensive in Humphrey Carpenter's revelations, quoted in the extracts which you published today, was Lord Runcie's

remark: "He's on about the grandeur of our cathedrals and epic language of the Prayer Book, but he wants to be exploring Hinduism with the people in the inner cities."

Surely, it is the mark of a cultured and civilised man to be imbued with curiosity about, and fascination for, the many forms of worship which exist outside the Anglican communion, and to be concerned with faith in the widest sense.

Where is the contradiction? Will we not all be the Prince's subjects when he ascends the throne? Does Lord Runcie imagine that those of us who are not bound by the Holy Trinity and the Anglican communion will be excluded from the Kingdom?

Yours etc,
GILLIAN COHN,
C3 Elm Court, 71 Barlow Moor Road,
Didsbury, Manchester.
September 9.

From Dr Robert Tyler

Sir, Your readers may be interested to know the context of your front-page photograph (September 10) of the Prince of Wales threading a needle "as controversy raged over his religious beliefs".

The occasion was the opening of this new Church of England education and training centre in inner-city Birmingham, during which the Prince visited an adult education hat-making class. He also visited the workshop room and showed great interest in our approach to Christianity — one which addresses all faiths through dialogue and co-operation.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT TYLER,
Centre Director,
St George's Post 16 Centre,
Newtown, Birmingham.
September 10.

From Mrs S. T. Chrystall

Sir, Surely it is time for everyone to stop castigating Prince Charles for one thing or another?

He has spent his life trying to help his people in many ways. He has a deep spiritual awareness which, if allowed to express itself, would draw

together his multi-racial subjects, be they Church of England, Hindu, Catholic, Buddhist or Muslim. This is the only way forward for us as a multi-ethnic people.

We would all be enriched in the process, and Charles will make in due course a wonderful King, a King for our time and for the 21st century.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHANIE CHRYSTALL,
Blackwater Farm, Sherfield English,
Romsey, Hampshire.
September 10.

From Mr Peter Goodford

Sir, The time is long past since there has been an ecumenical council of the eastern and western churches. It was the prerogative of princes to call these meetings, and there are very few princes who have the dedication, interest and will-power to attempt such a task today.

Our Prince of Wales certainly has the first two of these qualities, and he might achieve universal acclaim if he also proves to possess the strength of character needed to unite our divided Christendom. He may well be the last person who will ever be able to do so, and it would be the job of a lifetime.

Yours faithfully,
PETER GOODFORD,
The Old Vicarage,
Ascot under Wyckwood,
Oxfordshire.
September 10.

From Mr John L. Aimers

Sir, If the choice lies between my future King — with some honest doubts about his Church — and my past Archbishop — who brings scandal to that Church and hurt to the Royal Family by breaking the bond of confidentiality implicit in their special relationship — give me Charles every time!

Yours faithfully,
JOHN L. AIMERS
(Dominion Chairman and Founder),
The Monarchist League of Canada,
49 St Clair Avenue West, #505,
Toronto, Canada.
September 10.

Whale bones

From Mr Nicholas Redman

Sir, I only wish your report was correct in stating (Hidden Assets, Business, September 7) that the groto at Heythrop Park in Oxfordshire still houses the skeleton of a bottle-nosed whale.

Sadly this is not the case. The skeleton, which dated back to the 1870s, was removed in 1991 and taken off to the Natural History Museum in London, where, disarticulated, it remains in store. Although it was suffering in its dark and damp home, it is a pity that it proved impossible to preserve it in situ.

In the 19th century full-size whale skeletons were often displayed in public, and sometimes went on tour, not just in this country, but round the rest of Europe and to America. The setting up of skeletons in the grounds of large houses was, however, much less common. Of those that were, Heythrop's was almost certainly the last complete one in position and its loss is to be regretted.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS REDMAN,
Moorcove, Hindhead Road,
Haslemere, Surrey.
September 8.

Travelling expensively

From Mr Andrew Sullivan

Sir, I was delighted to hear what a smooth journey Lord Tugendhat enjoyed through France on the autoroute network recently (letter, September 7). In May of this year I, too, was obliged to drive to the far end of France and, since I had the deadline of a wedding ceremony to meet, I also revelled in the efficiency of the autoroutes.

However, when I arrived at my destination, a quick totting-up of my toll charges showed that my trip had cost me well in excess of £100 before I took into consideration fuel, food or accommodation.

Yours sincerely,
M. ANDREW SULLIVAN,
51 Norbiton Avenue,
Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey.

Squall in a teacup

From the Reverend Dr John Hunter

Sir, For many years my first task on getting up at 6.30am was to go downstairs and make a pot of tea. Having given my wife a cup I then went back to bed for half an hour to drink my tea and listen to Today.

Last Christmas my mother-in-law gave us a Teasmade: a splendid acquisition. It wakes me up but doesn't get me up and, since it is placed on my wife's side of the bed, she now serves me with a cup of tea.

Can someone please explain what is "naïf" about this, and why journalists should make fun of Norma Major for having one (report, September 4)?

Yours truly,
JOHN HUNTER,
Jacaranda,
The Street, Frampton on Severn.

Making reparation with Nazi gold

From the Policy Director of Mind

Sir, As debate grows on how the Nazi gold held in Swiss bank accounts can be repaid to its rightful owners (reports, September 10, 11, 12; leading article, September 11; article, September 12), we should pause to consider the different ways that Hitler's regime made money from its victims.

The so-called "euthanasia programmes" — in which about 250,000 adults and children with mental and physical disabilities were murdered in Germany and its occupied territories — were justified on the grounds of the economic savings to be made through "disinfecting" (killing) these "useless eaters". It was estimated that the first wave of killing — 70,273 people up to 1941 — saved 885,439,800 Reich Marks, assuming an average life expectancy of ten years.

Reparation could be made by allocating a proportion of the Nazi gold to groups of people with psychiatric or physical disabilities, whose sense of security in the world was so devastated by the Holocaust, and who are now working to assure their rightful place in society.

Yours faithfully,
LIZ SAYCE,
Policy Director, Mind,
15-19 Broadway, E15.
September 12.

From Mr H. H. Marcus

Sir, The publication of the Foreign Office report on the movement of Nazi

gold in and out of Germany did not adequately deal with undisclosed pre-war accounts held in Swiss banks.

As a lawyer advising descendants of Holocaust victims I have spoken to many clients, now usually in their seventies, who have very reasonable grounds to believe that their fathers or grandfathers made provision for their families in Switzerland before the war, but so far none of them have been able to identify the banks or details of such accounts. The establishment last year by the Swiss authorities of a banking ombudsman in Zurich may possibly lead to some elucidation in a few cases.

The only fair and equitable way to deal with this problem is for the Swiss to lift the banking secrecy in cases where there has been no movement on an account for, say, 50 years. These accounts should be published, giving details of the person who opened the account. Most of them will be dead, but it would help the survivors to identify their inheritance and enable researchers to look for the legitimate heirs, who would then be able to pursue their claim by following appropriate probate proceedings.

Perhaps Mr Rikind, who is due to visit Switzerland shortly, can persuade his Swiss counterpart to do just this.

Yours faithfully,
H. H. MARCUS,
Edmonds Bowen & Company,
4 Old Park Lane, W1.
September 12.

Down's syndrome

From Mr Robert Lord

Sir, It was heartening to read the sympathetic feature by Rachel Campbell-Johnston (August 28) concerning the effects of segregation on those born with Down's syndrome.

During my work as an interior colour consultant I have on many occasions come into contact in institutions with people with Down's syndrome. Their disposition seems to provide them with an above-average capacity to put themselves out for others, to give and when necessary to forgive.

Segregation unfortunately means that the public is denied a beneficial

contact which could put right many a misplaced concept concerning these gentle souls. Their innocence, however, might make them all too vulnerable were it not for organisations that provide shelter and a working community life.

As Ms Campbell-Johnston hints, abortion must remain a personal decision for parents. However, we may hope that doctors advising them about Down's syndrome children will be able to describe their loving nature from personal experience.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT LORD,
Chelwood Vachery,
Nutting, East Sussex.
September 3.

From Mr C. F. MacLaren

Sir, On a recent train journey I may have lighted on the definitive pronunciation of Edinburgh.

As we neared the city an Olympian voice announced: "This train is now approaching Embro Waverley."

As a long-expatiate Scot, my tribal memory was enough to tell me that if "Waverley" could be Waverley, then I was on the right train for Edinburgh.

Yours sincerely,
COLIN MACLAREN,
The Coach House,
Eye Park, Eye, Suffolk.

Morningside patter

From Mr Jeremy Lemmon

Sir, In his letter of September 2 about the pronunciation of "Edinburgh" (see also letter, September 5), Mr A. D. Matheson offers "the standard file rendition of 'Embrace', which ... rhymes with William McGonagall's 'silvery' Tay".

The reference would surely not have pleased that opinionated poet, since he seems to have preferred yet another challenging pronunciation: When the train left Edinburgh, The passengers' hearts were light and felt no sorrow

Yours faithfully,

Letters should carry a daytime

